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France urges Iraq to take U.N. oil deal

PARIS (R) — French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette urged Iraq on Sunday to take advantage of a U.N. offer to exchange oil for food and medicine to ease the hardships of its people under Gulf war trade sanctions. "I am worried about the humanitarian situation and France will not associate itself with any move that could aggravate the situation of the Iraqi public," Mr. De Charette told parliament. "But neither will we budge from the legitimate demands of the international community expressed by U.N. Security Council resolutions. One of these, Resolution 986, would allow an improvement in the humanitarian situation in Iraq if Iraqi authorities were ready to abide by it," he said. "France is trying to discreetly try to get Iraqi authorities to consider and to apply this resolution," he said. U.N. sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 permit food and medical imports, but with its oil exports blocked Baghdad lacks funds to pay for them.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي.

'Israel, Qatar to sign agreement'

DOHA (AFP) — Israel and Qatar will sign an agreement to establish air links, which will be the first between the Jewish state and a Gulf Arab country, a Qatari official said Sunday. "An Israeli delegation, including officials from the civil aviation, will visit Doha next week to sign an agreement," he told AFP, asking not to be named. He said the "Israeli authorities have sent a letter to Qatar, urging that bilateral relations be strengthened through an accord to exploit air transport between Tel Aviv and Doha." Under the proposed agreement, "an air liaison between Tel Aviv and Doha would be opened," he added, without specifying which company would exploit it. Qatar and Israel do not have diplomatic relations but Doha has taken several steps over the past few months for a rapprochement with the Jewish state. Qatar's Information and Culture Minister Hamad Aziz Al Kowari attended Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's funeral on Monday, while Israel last month signed a letter of intention to buy Qatari gas through U.S. company Enron. Qatar and Israel are also in talks over the opening of trade representation offices.

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Peres vows to continue Rabin's path for peace

Israelis pay tribute to slain leader with huge rally in Tel Aviv where he was assassinated

Combined agency dispatches

ACTING PRIME Minister Shimon Peres promised on Sunday to follow slain leader Yitzhak Rabin's path to peace but assailed the "devil's disciples" in Israel he said stood in the way.

Speaking at an emotional memorial ceremony of his ruling Labour Party, Mr. Peres, politicians and Mr. Rabin's family voiced bitterness and sorrow over killing of the 73-year-old prime minister by a Jewish gunman at a Nov. 4 peace rally.

Mr. Peres, 73, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Mr. Rabin and leader Yasser Arafat in 1994, said Israel had no choice but to "continue to pave (the way of peace) so that the children who cried on his grave will not have to shed a tear in the future."

But Mr. Peres warned the crowd of 3,000, including ambassadors from the United States, Egypt and Jordan, that there were "a lot of people on the edge of insanity who think they are God's messengers. In fact they are devil's disciples."

Mr. Rabin's widow Leah meanwhile urged Israelis to pursue his quest for peace as she told a memorial rally of more than 200,000 people that his death would not be in vain.

It was an emotional return for the premier's widow to the square in Tel Aviv where eight days earlier Mr. Rabin was shot dead at the end of a



Leah Rabin, wife of late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, touches his grave in the Mount Herzl cemetery in West Jerusalem on Sunday, the last day of seven days of traditional Jewish mourning for the dead (AFP photo)

Crown Prince delivers message from King to Bahraini Emir, reviews ties

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — The Emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, on Sunday received His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who delivered to him a message from His Majesty King Hussein, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

It is the first visit of a leading Jordanian figure to Bahrain since the 1991 Gulf war and is seen as yet another strong sign of improvement in Jordan's relations with the Gulf states after a four-year strain.

Petra said Crown Prince Hassan, who arrived here earlier in the day on a two-day visit in response to an invitation from Bahraini Crown Sheikh Hamad Ben Isa Al Khalifa, and Sheikh Isa discussed means of enhancing Jordanian-Bahrain cooperation and increasing consultations between the two countries.

Sheikh Isa paid tribute to the outcome of the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit held in Amman and lauded the efforts that Jordan exerted to make the conference a success, leading the way for widening the scope of cooperation among the countries of the region.

The Crown Prince emphasised the need to broaden the base for active participation by the countries of the region and the role that Bahrain could play as an important international financial and commercial centre in the Gulf and the region.

Sheikh Isa requested Prince Hassan to convey his greetings and best wishes to King Hussein on his 60th birthday and wished the Monarch continued good health and happiness.

The meeting was attended by the Bahraini prime minister and the Crown Prince in addition to senior officials. On the Jordanian side, the meeting was attended by Sharif Jamil Ben Nasser, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabrit, and the Jordanian ambassador to Bahrain.

On his way from Jordan to Bahrain and while he was flying through Saudi Arabia's airspace, Crown Prince Hassan sent a cable of good wishes to King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, wishing him and the Saudi family and people continued progress and prosperity.

Upon his arrival here, the Crown Prince was received by Sheikh Hamad, who is also commander of the Bahraini defence forces, and senior Bahraini officials.

The Crown Prince's talks in Bahrain would deal with Jordanian-Bahraini relations as well as moves to follow up and implement the decisions taken by the MENA summit on institutionalising regional cooperation as well as the status of efforts to realise a strong private sector role in developing the region.

The chief editors of Jordan's main dailies are accompanying the Crown Prince on the visit to Bahrain.



Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on Sunday receive Spain's Queen Sofia upon her arrival in Amman to congratulate the King on his 60th birthday

King attends Mafraq rally, voices pride in Jordanians

MAFRAQ (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday addressed a public rally held at Mafraq Governorate as part of the Kingdom's celebration of the King's 60th birthday expressing his appreciation to the Jordanian people and pride in belonging to the Jordanian family.

"The moments which I spend with you here are the most beautiful and most pleasant to me and I feel proud among my men and people," King Hussein said.

Referring to his younger years, the King said that he had to assume responsibility for the people and lead the struggle for construction at an early age and had to return to Jordan for this responsibility, thus losing the chance to pursue higher education.

"I have committed myself to live with you and for you and amongst you, drawing strength and resolve from my people to face the dangers and the challenges," King Hussein told the rally, which was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Lower House Speaker Sa'ad Hayel Srour, Parliament members and

King receives birthday wishes Rabin wrote weeks before death

KING HUSSEIN has received a birthday wish from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, written to him weeks before his assassination.

Mr. Rabin gave the letter to Jordanian photographer Zohrab Markarian in his Jerusalem office in early October during a meeting while the latter was shooting pictures for a new book, dedicated to the Monarch, who turns 60 on Tuesday.

"Mr. Rabin took out his pen and wrote a happy birthday letter to King Hussein and gave it to me to be included in the first copy of the new book 'The Kingdom of Peace'," Mr. Markarian was quoted as saying by news agencies on Sunday.

"The book and letter were given to His Majesty late on Saturday."

Mr. Rabin's hand-written letter, a copy of which was obtained by news agencies, said:

"I have learnt and undertaken the commitment to please God and serve the Jordanian people with a clear

(Continued on page 7)

Israel eases closure of West Bank, Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli authorities on Sunday eased the closure of the Palestinian territories imposed after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, an army spokesman said. All men aged 28 and above possessing Israeli work permits were allowed to travel to their jobs in Israel. Previously only those aged 30 and above had been given permission to enter the Jewish state, when the closure was first eased on Tuesday.

French rally for Israel-Arab peace

PARIS (R) — Several hundred people demonstrated in the French capital on Sunday in support of Israel's Labour-led government and the Arab-Israeli peace process. The demonstrators gathered on Israel Square in a residential north Paris neighbourhood holding placards reading: "We allowed Rabin to die, let's not let the peace process die too."

Kinkel refuses to resign over Iran

BONN (R) — Bloodied but unbowed, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel defied calls for his resignation at the weekend after absorbing a body blow from parliament over his handling of relations with Iran. "I will remain in office," Mr. Kinkel told the Welt am Sonntag weekly.

Major supports French A-tests

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister John Major Sunday robustly defended French President Jacques Chirac over his internationally-deplored decision to carry out nuclear tests in the South Pacific. Mr. Major, speaking in Auckland, New Zealand, where he is attending a Commonwealth summit, dismissed as "humbug" and "grandstanding" outrage expressed by other Commonwealth nations over the French tests begun in September.

'Shin Bet was tipped off of Rabin assassination plan 5 months ago'

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI POLICE were warned five months before the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that he was being targeted by a Jewish extremist, Israeli radio revealed Sunday adding to a catalogue of security errors.

Police, the internal security services Shin Bet and army intelligence had precise information from June 15 about Mr. Rabin's assassin Yigal Amir, five months before he gunned the premier down in Tel Aviv, the radio said.

Amid the new revelations, police announced a news blackout on the progress of its investigation into the assassination.

"We don't want to turn it into an O.J. investigation," police spokesman Eric Ben-Chen said, referring to former football star O.J. Simpson whose arrest and double-

murder trial in Los Angeles dominated the U.S. media for more than a year.

"No one can work with the press crawling all over us. We don't want to conduct the investigation on the pages of the newspapers and on television screens."

He said that aside from "periodic news releases" in coordination with the security services, "we won't be going into any more details about the investigation."

Seven suspects, including confessed killer Amir are in custody. None has been charged.

Police announced earlier they had arrested a sergeant with an elite army corps and his father, bringing to eight the number of people being held.

State radio said the Shin Bet head and several top officials, whose identities are kept secret, may have to resign if it is proved that the service failed in its job to gather intelligence on the far-right.

Right-wing extremist Shlomo Halevy told an army intelligence officer and police on June 15 that a radical was planning to kill Mr. Rabin, the radio reported.

Halevy, who knew Amir for two years, did not give the assassin's name so as not to "betray his friends," saying he had overheard two Israelis talking by accident in a public toilet.

But he supplied lots of details, describing the assassin as a 25-year-old student from the Bar Ilan university near Tel Aviv, of Yemeni origin with short hair. He added the attack would be carried out by a pistol.

The information described exactly what happened on Nov. 4 at a peace rally in Tel Aviv.

In a report a police officer said the information was "serious and concrete" adding the "informant who supplied it was level-headed."

The information was passed onto the Shin Bet, which filed away the dossier but failed to identify Yigal Amir.

After the murder, investigators were "stunned" to find that the information given by Halevy matched exactly the assassination.

Halevy was among those arrested as part of the inquiry into the murder, but he was later released.

The report led to further speculation of Shin Bet's role in the affair, with an Israeli lecturer charging they must have colluded with Amir.

"The attack could not have succeeded without the conspiracy of the security services," said Michael Harsanyi.

(Continued on page 7)

Arafat and 12 other PLO executives review course of peace after Rabin

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership met here on Sunday to work out its next moves in continuing the peace process after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"We examined the measures which the PLO and Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) must take to ensure that the peace process continues on a good track despite Rabin's assassination," Palestinian Finance Minister Zohdi Nashashibi said.

Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres has assured PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat that an Israeli troop redeployment would continue on schedule with a withdrawal from six West Bank towns by the end of the year.

A spokesman for the Egyptian presidency said meanwhile Mr. Peres would not come to Egypt for talks with

body in the organisation, due to internal disputes.

But committee member Samir Ghoshe, the PNA labour minister, said the political situation in the self-rule areas of Gaza and the West Bank, and in Israel after the assassination of Mr. Rabin, made the presence of all active members necessary.

"The Palestinians are entering a new stage now, with the elections coming up. It is necessary to mobilise all political powers to help see this stage through and to decide relations with a post-Rabin Israel," Mr. Ghoshe told Reuters.

He said the unprecedented elections in the self-rule areas, due to be held in 1996, dominated the committee's first session. Mr. Ghoshe said the executive members also discussed the controversial U.S. congressional vote to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"This is not a time for

anyone who works for the country to abstain," he added.

Three of the original 18 members resigned in protest at the Oslo agreement, which set the guidelines for Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Prominent poet Mahmoud Darwish had resigned before the agreement.

The biggest surprises were the presence of Suleiman Nabab of the Palestinian People's Party and of independent Abdullah Hourani, who said in 1993 he would not attend until the Palestinian parliament decided on the self-rule agreements.

Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's foreign minister, and Mahmoud Abbas, better known as Abu Mazen, have also stayed away from the last two committee meetings but were present at the current gathering.

(Continued on page 7)



ARAB BANK

ANNOUNCES THE OPENING OF ITS NEW BRANCH IN VALENCIA / SPAIN



ARAB BANK / VALENCIA WILL START ITS BANKING OPERATIONS AS FROM MONDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 1995

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Supreme court orders Israel to respect Jewish reform converts

TEL AVIV (AP) — The supreme court ruled Sunday that the state must recognise conversion to Judaism performed by reform movement rabbis in Israel.

Reform leaders hailed the landmark six-to-one ruling, saying it would break the "monopoly jurisdiction" of the orthodox establishment in Israel which has had exclusive control over marriages, divorces, and conversions.

"I think it is a major step, not only in the area of constitutional law and the rule of law in Israel, but also in historic terms with regard to the state of Israel and the Jewish people," said Uri Regev, head of the Israel Religious Action Centre, a reform institution.

However, he noted the ruling only applied to recognition by the state over who is a Jew and did not compel the chief rabbinate, the top religious body in the country, to recognise such conversions.

Until now, reform conversions performed abroad were usually recognised by the state but those in Israel were not.

Mr. Regev said the reform movement still had a long way to go before achieving equal status in the Jewish state. The chief rabbinate, he noted, still had the authority to refuse marriage and birth certificates requested by Jews converted under the reform movement.

Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau dismissed Sunday's court ruling as unacceptable, saying the orthodox establishment would not accept as Jews those who were not converted according to strict Jewish law, or halacha.

"We will not be able to recognise a conversion that is a fiction," Rabbi Lau told army radio. "We will not be able to recognise as a member of the Jewish people one whose entrance is not been acceptable for generations under the Jewish law."

Rabbi Lau's response indicated that the ruling could further confuse the possible answers to the question who is a Jew?

Mr. Regev said the ruling was limited only to the area of civil registration for the population registry, and that the "orthodox monopoly"

was still in place over marriage and divorce.

The appellant, Hava Goldstein, will be registered as a Jew on her identity card, but the rabbinate would not be obligated to recognise her as a Jew under halacha, or religious law. That means she will not be able to have a recognised marriage in Israel and her children could also have problems marrying.

"Without civil marriage, and reform and conservative rabbis being able to marry, that means that these thousands and thousands of thousands of Israeli citizens are denied the basic human right of marriage," Mr. Regev said.

"When you ask the question 'who is a Jew?' in Israel, there isn't one answer," he added. "A Jew for the purpose of marriage and divorce is one thing and a Jew for the purpose of the 'law of return' is another."

The ruling also stated that a parliamentary legislation could overturn the supreme court decision recognising reform and conservative conversions.

The reform movement is the largest stream of Judaism in the United States, where it claims a membership of more than 1.5 million out of about 3 million Jews who have an affiliation. Most of the rest belong to orthodox and conservative synagogues.

About half of U.S. Jews are non-affiliated.

Reform Judaism was founded in Germany in the mid-19th century as many Jews began shedding orthodox. It sought to modernise religious practice and prayer rituals, sometimes by rejecting traditions such as wearing a skullcap or avoiding travel on the Jewish Sabbath.

In Israel, it is still widely viewed as a foreign import and has attracted only several thousand followers, many of them immigrants who belonged to the reform stream in Europe or the United States.

While its growth has also been kept in check by orthodox rabbis, the reform movement last year scored a success with the appointment of one of its leaders to a local religious council, under supreme court order.



ALGERIANS VOTE: An Algerian woman living in France casts her vote for the Nov. 16 presidential elections in Algeria under a tent set up at the Algerian consulate in Marseilles (see story below and on page 12) (AFP photo)

Leah Rabin symbolises Israel's grief

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel, shaken to the core by the assassination of its leader Yitzhak Rabin, has turned to his widow, Leah, to share her grief and draw courage from her for the future.

The murder of the Israeli prime minister by a Jewish fanatic in a plot to sabotage the peace process plunged the country into a whirlpool of grief.

But of all the outpourings of sorrow, none has been more visible than Leah Rabin. Since the shooting on Nov. 4, she has hardly been out of the public eye.

The Rabin family tragedy was in turn a tragedy for the nation.

On Sunday Leah Rabin was to return to the same Tel Aviv square where she saw her husband, 73, shot down before her eyes, to pay painful tribute to his memory and his work, before hundreds of thousands of Israelis.

Throughout the week condolences flooded in from world leaders and ordinary mourners.

Mrs. Rabin was there at the centre, leading the nation in its grief and providing a potent message of hope for the continuation of the peace process which cost her husband of 47 years his life.

Even in the depths of her sorrow as clinging to her family she watched her husband's coffin lowered into his grave and covered with earth, she retained an air of dignity.

After the burial in the Mount Herzl cemetery she

stood for more than an hour to receive a long line of condolences from 2,000 VIPs, including 70 heads of state.

U.S. President Bill Clinton embraced her, while King Hussein called her "sister."

And in the strongest proof of her commitment to her husband's legacy, Leah Rabin received Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and served him coffee in her home near Tel Aviv during his first visit to the heart of Israel as Palestinian leader since 1967.

It was also Leah Rabin who voiced what many privately felt, when she publicly pointed the finger at right wing Likud opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu for whipping up a climate of violence against her husband.

She admitted in an interview: "I think by the assassination of my husband the country has gained the opposite of innocence. It was a mind opening, it was a beginning of a new era."

While acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres worked behind the scenes to overcome the political fallout of Mr. Rabin's murder, Leah Rabin seemed to become the symbol of a different Israel, forced to examine its conscience about the causes of the killing, but which had found a new place on the world stage.

There have even been murmurings in the past days that Mr. Rabin's 68-year-old widow should enter politics.

But Aliza Goren, Mr. Rabin's spokeswoman said: "I don't think she'll do that."

"She did what she felt she wanted to do and was entitled to do. It was not done out of a sense of duty. She did it honourably."

Born in Germany, Leah moved to Palestine in 1933. Since her marriage to Yitzhak Rabin in August 1948 she had rarely left her husband's side. They have two children, and three grandchildren.

The couple first met when they worked together in the Palmach Corps, part of the underground Hagana, the armed wing of the Zionist movement.

"She's a very strong lady. She knew what her husband was facing. She was the sort of wife who went where her husband went. She was exposed to many things," Ms. Goren said.

Leah Rabin was also no stranger to controversy. In 1977 her husband was forced to resign over a scandal involving a secret foreign currency bank account in her name in Washington.

In the following elections, the right wing Likud Party was swept to power for the first time since the creation of Israel in 1948.

On Sunday Leah Rabin was to first attend a commemorative ceremony with President Ezer Weizman at her husband's tomb, at the end of a week-long period of mourning, before addressing the crowds at the Tel Aviv memorial.

Filipino says Iraq planning sabotage in Kuwait

KUWAIT (AP) — A Filipino who confessed to being recruited by Iraq to hijack a Kuwaiti airliner has told interrogators Baghdad planned sabotage operations against the emirate, Al Anba daily reported Sunday.

The pro-government, Arabic-language newspaper said the man Kuwait airport authorities arrested Thursday was carrying a machine-gun, small arms, ammunition, four passports and catalogues of civilian aircraft.

It said the Filipino had arrived from Cyprus to catch a Kuwait Airways flight to Bangkok and Manila. He was instructed to seize the aircraft and demand ransom and the release of prisoners jailed in Kuwait for collaborating with Iraqi forces.

Airport security officers foiled the attempt.

Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait in August 1990, but a U.S.-led coalition force liberated the emirate seven months later.

Al Anba first reported the arrest of the Filipino Saturday, but there has been no word from the government on the incident. If confirmed, his revelations would lend weight to repeated warnings by the government that Iraq remains a major threat to the security of the emirate.

A Philippines embassy official was quoted by the English-language daily Arab Times Sunday as saying he was aware of the fact that a Philippines national was being interrogated by authorities.

The Filipino, according to Al Anba, told investigators he had learned from Iraqi agents in Cyprus, where he was recruited, that they planned to infiltrate Kuwait from the sea to carry out sabotage operations.

He said the agents wanted to undermine Kuwait's security by carrying out several small operations to be followed by a big effective one, Al Anba said without giving details.

Iraqi intelligence "agents working on plans to sabotage Kuwait were called 'partners in jihad' the man told interrogators, according to Al Anba.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel to issue stamp in memory of Rabin

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel will issue a postage stamp honouring slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin one month after his assassination, the postal authority said Sunday. The stamp, bearing the official photograph of Mr. Rabin, will be worth five shekels (\$1.60). Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni decided not to wait a full year from the time of death as is customary, but to issue the stamp 30 days after the assassination, the postal service said in a statement.

S. Arabia hails Muslim-Croat accord

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia on Sunday hailed as an important step towards peace the accord signed between Bosnia's Croats and Muslims to strengthen their federation. "This agreement is the best peace initiative to end the ethnic conflict in this republic," the official Saudi newspaper Al Riyadh said. "The biggest and most important step will be to force the Bosnian Serbs to join." It added, Saudi Arabia fully supports Bosnia's Muslims and has granted them hundreds of millions of dollars since the conflict in the former Yugoslavian republic erupted in 1992. The agreement, signed Friday at a midwestern U.S. military base, strengthens the Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia, which Washington helped engineer in March last year to bring together the two feuding factions that were nominally allied against the Serbs.

Albania, Turkey end war games

TIRANA (AFP) — Albania and Turkey wound up four days of joint military manoeuvres off the Adriatic coast Saturday, the Albanian defence ministry announced. The Mares 1995 manoeuvres, which included rescue operations at sea, were held within the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme, the second involving Albania and NATO member Turkey this year. Two hundred Albanians and Turks took part in the exercise.

U.N. expects Greek-Cypriot soldier's release

NICOSIA (AFP) — U.N. peacekeepers have met with a 19-year-old Greek-Cypriot soldier being held by Turkish forces on the northern side of the divided island and said Saturday they expect his release in a few days. The United Nations is "pursuing efforts to have him returned quickly," said U.N. spokesman Charles Gaultier. "We are pretty sure that we will have him back in a few days." The soldier, identified as Georgios Karotsakis, entered the Turkish-Cypriot zone near the capital Nicosia on Nov. 3 for an unknown reason. He was unarmed. The Turkish-Cypriot news agency TAK said Thursday that the soldier would be tried for entering Turkish-held territory without permission. The incident has caused hundreds of students to protest for the soldier's release along the buffer zone separating the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot zones sides over the past week. About 10 U.N. peacekeepers were slightly injured as the Greek-Cypriot students tried to force their way into the zone.

Kuwait destroys seized whisky and beer

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait on Sunday destroyed 199,647 confiscated cans of beer and bottles of whisky in line with a ban on alcohol in the country. The action by a branch of the state prosecution service was the first such operation this year. The Kuwait News Agency said, Kuwaiti authorities destroyed 56,000 bottles of alcohol in April 1994. Residents in the emirate say most confiscated alcohol is found by customs officers searching for contraband hidden in commercial cargo and travellers' luggage.

France pledges protection of Gulf states

ABU DHABI (AFP) — France will defend Gulf Arab states against an external attack as it did when it participated in the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi invasion forces, Defence Minister Charles Millon said on Sunday. Mr. Millon, interviewed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force Magazine, an Arabic language publication, said France wanted durable stability in the region, home to more than 60 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves. "France is contributing seriously and effectively to the consolidation of security and stability in the Gulf," he said. "It is also committed to the protection of Gulf states against any permanent danger even through military means as was the case when it participated in the coalition forces to liberate Kuwait five years ago." France was a key member of the U.S.-led international alliance that ejected Iraqi troops from Kuwait in early 1991 after seven months of occupation.

Amnesty to boost presence in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Amnesty International seeks to expand its 100-strong membership in Kuwait, the only Gulf country where it has a branch, a visiting delegate from the London-based organisation said Sunday. "We want to promote the organisation and attract more members and supporters," Abdul Motal Girchab, Amnesty's membership development coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, told AFP. He said the two-member delegation was expected in the next few days in Kuwait to visit prisons and to hold talks with the Kuwaiti national committee for missing persons and prisoners of war captured during the August 1990-February 1991 Iraqi occupation. Kuwait has been seeking from Iraq information on 605 persons captured during the occupation, but Baghdad denies holding any prisoners. Kuwait has the only elected parliament in the Gulf, with a parliamentary commission on human rights.

Election a credibility test for Algeria's military-backed regime

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerians go to the polls on Thursday in their country's first multi-party presidential election, knowing their votes could make or break their military-backed government's credibility.

With incumbent President Liamine Zeroual widely regarded as the frontrunner, the main uncertainties in the first round of voting will be the turnout, the behaviour of Islamic fundamentalist voters, and the threat of violence.

All four candidates have campaigned on a platform of ending the country's war, which has cost more than 30,000 lives since the authorities cancelled Algeria's first free legislative elections in January 1992.

The fundamentalists, who were poised to win those elections, have called for a massive boycott of the presidential poll and armed mili-

tants have threatened to kill those who dare to venture out to cast their ballots.

Almost 16 million electors are eligible to vote, compared to the 12.5 million registered for the first round of voting in the legislative elections in December 1991, when the turnout was 59 per cent.

Mr. Zeroual, who has repeatedly declared that the militants have lost the public's support, has acknowledged that the credibility of the election this time will be measured on the turnout.

The president, who was appointed for an interim period of three years by the High Council of State on Jan. 30 last year, has promised to hold elections for the legislature and regional and local assemblies if he wins.

Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi has said he would be satisfied with a turnout of around 60 per cent of the first

round on Thursday.

In the annulled 1991 elections, the now banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the National Liberation Front (FLN), the former single ruling party, and the Socialist Forces Front (SFF) won 78.51 per cent of the vote.

But all of the candidates in this election have insisted that, after almost four years of civil war, economic collapse and political stalemate, the electorate's past voting record means nothing this time.

Political analysts, however, have acknowledged that the FIS, banned in March 1992, still has a large reservoir of support. In 1991 it won 188 parliamentary seats, far ahead of the SFF (25) and the FLN (15).

What remains uncertain is whether FIS supporters will abstain this time or shift their votes to other candidates.

The most likely candidate to benefit from FIS sympathisers is Sheikh Mahfoud Nahnah, who advocates a modern and tolerant Islam and puts forward policies and slogans similar to those of the banned party.

Sheikh Nahnah has considerable support among the middle class but has been criticised by the FIS and threatened with death by the militant Armed Islamic Group (GIA).

The GIA's threats to kill voters and a call by another armed organisation, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), armed wing of the FIS, for people not to leave their homes on polling day, have raised fears of a bloodbath.

Until now, however, there has been no noticeable escalation in the violence, which nevertheless claims lives virtually everyday.

The most spectacular militant operations so far have

been two car bomb attacks that left 17 dead and almost 200 injured at the start of the campaign and the killing of a French nun and wounding of another in Algiers on Friday.

Tight security around the candidates and their election meetings has so far ensured that there have no major incidents at political rallies but the public are sceptical about the chances of a peaceful campaign.

The independent newspaper L'Opinion, summing up the country's visible concern, spoke of a "certain calm on the security front" but also warned that observers feared a sharp rise in violence on election day.

Reuters adds: Heavily armed soldiers reinforced barricades on main arteries leading into Algiers on Sunday, as campaigning moved into a final 24 hours for the elections. Eyewitnesses said troops

took over a school in Hamamet area, some two kilometres from the Muslim fundamentalist bastion of Bab Al Oued in the capital.

More soldiers, Kalashnikov assault rifles ready, manned a roadblock nearby to check identities of bus passengers and motorists and to search vehicles.

"My brother, an army officer, has had all leave cancelled because of the mobilisation for the presidential election," said one young resident of a district not far from Algiers airport.

Foot patrols of at least 10 armed soldiers were seen by residents on Saturday in Rais Hamidou, near 'Ain Taya forest on the outskirts of Algiers, and in other districts.

State-controlled television gave wide coverage to the start of voting by Algerians abroad, such as in France and Belgium.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Inspector Gadget
14:30 Playhouse
14:45 Hey Day
15:00 Feature: "Copacabana"
17:00 Children's programme — Fractale
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Nimbus
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Love Lucy
20:00 You Bet Your Life
20:25
21:00 Doc. — On the Banks of Jordan
21:00 Al Hussein... A World Tribute
23:00 News in English
23:25 The Wall (Roger Waters in Concert)

PRAYER TIMES

05:39 (Sunrise) Fajr
11:20 Dhuhr
14:16 Asr
16:41 Maghrib
18:01 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 652785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrestrial Church Tel. 622364
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652626
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be relatively cool with temperatures below average and winds easterly moderate. In Amman, dusty weather conditions will prevail with winds northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 3/17
Aqaba 12/23
Doebs 11/18
Jordan Valley 9/22

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 791264
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 649124
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Isam Al Asmar 890304
Firas pharmacy 641412
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637855
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 643445
Shamsani pharmacy 637661
Nawrah pharmacy 623672
Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qunus 281484
Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Fahd Abdul Salam 985459
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637277
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Evangelical Police 843402
Traffic Police 986391
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 661176
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 767111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010231
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Amman Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 699100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Highways Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 06-53200

ZARQA:
Dr. Fahd Abdul Salam 985459
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 812813/32

IRBID:
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Alquds pharmacy (—)

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QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) international department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200. S. where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sanaa (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 Amman (RJ)
09:30 Doha (RJ)
09:35 Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:20 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:40 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
10:45 Bangkok (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:00 Rome (AZ)
04:45 Khartoum (SD)
09:50 Cairo (MS)
12:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:00 Vienna (OS)
15:30 Kiev (AU)
19:00 Athens, Beirut (AF)
22:45 Athens, Beirut (AF)
23:05 London (BA)
01:20 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sanaa (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 Amman (RJ)
09:30 Doha (RJ)
09:35 Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:20 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:40 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
10:45 Bangkok (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

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15:30 Kiev (AU)
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22:45 Athens, Beirut (AF)
23:05 London (BA)
01:20 Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 680
Cabbage (Mekammar) 700/100
Carrot 270/180
Cauliflower 140/100
Cucumbers (large) 220/150
Cucumbers (small) 400/300
Eggplant 150/80
Garlic 750/500
Grapes 620/500
Guava 180/100
Lemon 450/300
Marrow (large) 100/60
Marrow (small) 190/120
Onion (green) 580/450
Onion (red) 340/250
Orange 250/150
Pepper (hot) 160/120
Pepper (sweet) 170/120
Potato 250/250
Spinach 280/200
String Beans 620/500
Tangerine 250/150
Tomato 120/70

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Home News

VTC to form national training programme preparatory teams

AMMAN (Petra)—The Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) is forming teams to help it develop training programmes in its vocational training centres around the country.

VTC Director General Ali Nasrallah Sunday chaired a meeting of the corporation's board to review this project which suggests the formation of 11 national teams, each grouping seven members from the corporation itself and the rest from other concerned public and private sector organisations.

At the meeting, attended by Minister of Labour Nader Abul Shaer, Mr. Nasrallah submitted a working paper which suggested the creation of the teams, and developing programmes at the vocational centres so that they can cater to the needs of the local labour markets and absorb modern technologies.

Mr. Nasrallah said the teams will be entrusted with developing programmes for training youths in electronics, auto mechanics, carpentry, air conditioning, refrigeration, plumbing, hotel and restaurant management, baking, textile manufacturing, leather and traditional handicrafts, hair dressing, construction and general industrial maintenance.

The paper also called for the creation of a higher steering committee of 12 members headed by the VTC director to follow up on the activities of the proposed national teams.

According to the paper, the 11 teams will be responsible for recommending to the higher committee new trends and new programmes in vocational training.

The Minister of Labour and the board members endorsed the working paper and said work will soon start on implementing its proposals.

Road accidents kill 4 adults, 1 child

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Five people including one child were killed and seven more were injured Saturday in five separate road accidents in the kingdom, according to police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

Public Security Department (PSD) reports said a one-year-old Huwara child who was playing in the street was run over and killed by a pick-up truck driven by Abdul Latif Musa, 45.

The baby, Nisreen Mohammad, died on her way to Princess Basma Hospital in Irbid, according to police reports.

Also in Irbid, a 50-year-old man died and three people were listed in fair condition following a road accident which involved a vehicle that rolled over in Irbid.

Traffic officials attributed the accident to reckless driving and wrongful overtaking by the driver of the vehicle. The deceased was identified as Kadri Judeh. Three other men were injured in the same accident.

CDD reports said Sunday that a 45-year-old man was killed Saturday when the trailer he was driving on Muqabelin Road near Juweideh rolled over.

Nas'eim Mohammad Musa was killed instantly, the reports said, adding that the trailer, which belonged to the Amman Municipality, was completely wrecked.

In Zarqa, a 28-year-old Bangladeshi man was killed when he was run over by a bus on the Zarqa Highway, PSD reports said.

According to the report, Mohammad Aref Al Haq, who was killed instantly, was hit by a bus driven by Mohammad Hmoud, 33, a Syrian national.

Also on Saturday, in another road collision which involved a vehicle and a bus, a 44-year-old man of Turkish origin was killed on the Yadoudeh Street in Amman, PSD reports said.

The report said that the driver of the vehicle, Fouad Ahmad was killed when his car met head-on with an oncoming bus. The driver of the bus, Abdul Hamid Amer, 53 was listed in serious condition, the report added.

Saturday's five road accident related deaths brought the number of people killed on the Kingdom's roads to nine during the past four days. Four people alone were killed last Tuesday in road collisions because of slippery roads.

Queen inaugurates mosaic school, archaeological park in Madaba

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday formally inaugurated the Madaba Mosaic School (MMS) and the Madaba Archaeological Park, two institutions that not only will play a major role in the conservation and preservation of Jordan's rich cultural and historical heritage, but also will provide new important job opportunities, promoting cultural tourism and introducing a new craft in the Kingdom.

The opening ceremony, held in the heart of Madaba's old city, was attended by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Ilah Khatib, Italian, U.S. and Canadian Ambassadors to Jordan Romualdo Bettini, Wesley Egan, and Michel de Salaberry, along with officials from governmental institutions and the Madaba municipality and governorate.

The MMS and the Madaba Archaeological Park represent the successful result of the combined efforts exerted by the Department of Antiquities at the Ministry of Tourism of Jordan, the Italian government, the U.S. government and the Canadian government.

In fact, the MMS is a public school established in 1992 within the framework of a bilateral agreement for cooperation between Italy and Jordan and was financed with \$ 1.05 million from the Jordanian side and \$ 2 million from the Italian side.

The idea of creating a school to train young Jordanians to conserve and restore the large number of beautiful and precious mosaics excavated or under excavation in the Madaba area was started by Father



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday tours sites of the Madaba Archaeological Park which she formally inaugurated along with the Madaba Mosaic School (photo by Crystal)

ate an archaeological park in the heart of the ancient city of Madaba was started in 1991 by the Ministry of Tourism of Jordan, the ACOR, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Society for the preservation of Madaba's Heritage and Suburbs.

The main component of the project was the construction of a shelter over two of the most important sites: the Church of the Virgin and the Hippolytus Hall, with their beautiful mosaics showing pastoral and hunting scenes' bordered by acanthus scrolls and personifications of the seasons.

According to Ammar Khammash, the architect who designed the shelter and carried out many works and restorations in Madaba, no machinery was employed in the construction of the shelter, but the design was "labour-intensive". 600 tonnes of stones were gathered from the dump yards around the site and up to 70% of the final cost went in salaries for the 35 local workers employed every day for 1000 working days in the construction of the shelter.

The Queen toured all the archaeological sites of the Madaba Archaeological Park and visited the MMS, where she also talked to the students who were attending a class.

In a speech delivered during the ceremony, Mr. Egan said "the preservation, restoration and thoughtful presentation of Jordan's treasures is an important objective of the government of Jordan... and helps to invigorate the economy of the modern town of Madaba... by contributing to local business revenues and by expanding the potential of the tourism sector".

Mr. Bettini said "the Jordanian authorities and foreign archaeological missions have made impressive efforts to protect the archaeological sites allowing the tourism industry to become a leading factor for the development of the country's economy". He added that "the Madaba area will significantly contribute to the development of the country's economy in the future".

Queen Noor praised the Ministry of Tourism and expressed her admiration at the co-operation between the public and private sector's initiative in revitalising the heart of the ancient and historic city of Madaba.

The Queen, accompanied by Nawzat Shaker, was received by HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and Princess Majda Ra'ed, Pierre Bikai, director of ACOR, and Prof. Piccirillo, as well as officials from the Madaba Municipality and governorate.

'UNICEF greeting cards, games and gifts help children realise fuller, healthier lives'

By Ghalia Ahul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Some of the world's best known museums and artists have joined forces to make this year's season of good wishes a happy occasion for the deprived children of the world.

How: through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) greeting cards which are sold to the public throughout the world with the revenue used for children's development programmes.

Some of the greeting cards were designed by the best artists or donated by famous museums, and some included oriental paintings that celebrate Arab and Islamic culture, said Nazeek Bitar, senior information assistant for the Jordan Country Programme at UNICEF and greeting card coordinator.

She said that all the donations UNICEF receives in addition to the revenue of the sales of the cards in the Kingdom will go to funding the child and mother programme in Jordan, and to other local programmes which UNICEF believes are important but receive no funding from the UNICEF headquarters in New York.

International and Arab and Muslim artists whose works are featured on UNICEF's cards include, Ali Qleibo from Palestine, Joachim Miro of the Spanish school, Lamia Abdul Sahib from Iraq and Mamdouh Kachlan from Syria.

The cards cater to a variety of tastes and are produced on recycled paper to stress the agency's concern for protecting the environ-



A UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) greeting card designed by Palestinian artist Ali Qleibo.

ment.

"We have an exclusive oriental collection, and for the first time a Palestinian artist is taking part in designing a UNICEF card," Ms. Bitar added.

She said that all UNICEF greeting cards, gift items, agendas and other items are available at major stores and book shops in the Kingdom. They are also available at UNICEF headquarters in Amman.

Ms. Bitar added that UNICEF receives donations from international companies that produce expensive products with the revenues used in funding child and mother programmes.

But she stressed that local support is essential in enabling UNICEF to carry out its programmes in the Kingdom.

"The cooperation from our society is a key to a continuous development," said Ms. Bitar.

UNICEF was established in 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly to meet the emergency needs of children in the aftermath of world war II.

In 1953 it became a permanent part of the United Nations system with its mandate extended indefinitely and expanded to cover children all over the world.

ICARDA to open 2 seminars on farming technology transfer

AMMAN (J.T.) — The International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) Monday will open two training seminars for participants from Arab and regional countries to discuss ways to transfer modern farming technology to the Arab states and matters related to biodiversity in farming.

Nasri Haddad, ICARDA regional programme coordinator, told the Jordan Times that the first seminar aims at providing the participants with expertise in communicating with farmers to sound out their views about modern technology they wish to acquire and to learn more about their present methods.

Participants from Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Libya will listen to lectures from ICARDA experts working in Morocco, Turkey and Jordan, he said.

The second seminar will be entitled: collection, conservation and evaluation of plant genetics resource, and will focus on preserving and evaluating plant genetics resource, biodiversity conservation and genes banks, said Dr. Haddad.

He said the participants will also concentrate on the preservation of local strains of plants and ICARDA's cooperation with the participating countries in this field.

Taking part in the second seminar are participants from Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Iran, said Dr. Haddad, who added that the seminars, which are organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, will be held at the Jerusalem Hotel and last until Nov. 23.

Actors take show to Israel despite unions' opposition

Amman (AP) — Two Jordanian comedians Sunday left Amman to perform in Israel, ignoring protests by unions opposed to normalising ties with the Jewish state.

Nabil Sawalha and Hisham Yanis, Jordan's most famous stand-up comedians, will be the first Jordanian actors to perform in Israel since it signed a peace treaty with Jordan last year.

A member of a pop band which performed in Israel last year was suspended by the artists' union, one of 12 professional unions in Jordan which threaten to expel any of their 80,000 members if they made contacts with Israel.

The unions are dominated by Islamists who advocate the destruction of the Jewish state and leftists who regard the Mideast peace process as biased in favour of Israel.

The government has repeatedly asked the unions to stay away from politics, but several writers, journalists, artists, doctors and engineers have so far been expelled or referred to disciplinary panels for contacts with Israel.

Mr. Yanis said he and Mr. Sawalha resigned from their union a few months ago "because it threatened to expel us." Mr. Yanis, also a writer, said the writers' federation has also tried to force him to resign but he refused.

"They have no right to control us," Mr. Yanis said. "I am not afraid to go to Israel since our government encourages such contacts, and we are in a state of peace with the Israelis."

Mr. Yanis said his performance in Israel will help deliver a Jordanian message to the Israelis. "We want them to know that we support peace and we want to exchange views and knowledge."

He said he and Mr. Sawalha will perform in Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas their popular "Peace, Oh Peace," a satirical one-act play on the Arab-Israeli peace process.

"We are not against peace with Israel, but we are against normalisation of ties until Israel ends its occupation of all Arab lands," said Ibrahim Absi, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Writers.

Mohammed Barmawi, chairman of the Jordanian Artists Association, declined comment.

Former U.S. envoy sees full Jordan-Gulf reconciliation within 5 years

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A total healing of the rift between the Gulf states and Jordan caused by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait will not be complete for several years, says a former U.S. diplomat with extensive experience in the Middle East region.

William Rugh, who spent about 30 years in the region as an American diplomat, believes that the Gulf leaders were deeply hurt by Jordan's refusal to endorse a military option to evict Iraq from Kuwait and join the American-led coalition that eventually liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in February 1991.

Mr. Rugh, is currently the president of the American-Mideast Educational and Training Service (AMIDEAST) which aims

at promoting understanding and cooperation between Americans and the people of the Middle East through education, information and development programmes.

He was in Jordan to attend a conference on obstacles to obtaining U.S. student visas.

Speaking at a lecture he delivered at the World Affairs Council in Amman on Saturday evening, Mr. Rugh said the United States, which has excellent relations with the Gulf states and Jordan, has a policy of non-interference in relations between "brotherly states."

As such, he implied, the U.S. cannot be expected to play a strong role in efforts to bring about reconciliation between the Gulf states and the countries that they perceived as having supported the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

"It is difficult to predict a date, but complete reconciliation could take about five years," Mr. Rugh told the Jordan Times after the lecture.

The United States "can be an honest broker, but all parties should accept that our role, which is not more than facilitating communications," he added.

On the Gulf states' approach towards the Middle East peace process and the related prospects for regional cooperation, Mr. Rugh said the Gulf countries were not interested in financing the Middle East Development Bank since they think it is a means for the poor countries of the region to "get their hands on Gulf funds."

Similarly, they also believe that the Middle East and North Africa economic summit held in Amman last month was "Israel's Trojan

horse" to get into the Gulf area, he said.

Security rather than Arab solidarity is the main concern of the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC); Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), according to Mr. Rugh.

Even the GCC countries are split into three sub-groups, he said. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain in a hardline group, the United Arab Emirates on its own in a neutral stand, and Oman and Qatar in a "conciliatory group," he added.

By and large, the GCC's stand towards the peace process depends largely on progress in the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel, particularly because of Syria's good relations with Iran which is seen by the GCC countries as a major source of threat to

their own interests, said Mr. Rugh.

"The countries in the first and second groups will not antagonise Syria, which has excellent relations with Iran, their main security concern," Mr. Rugh said.

These two groups are also the most important players in the region since they produce almost 470 million barrels of oil a day, he said.

They are also the most rigid in terms of relations with Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and adopt hardline policies towards Iraq and Iran, said Mr. Rugh.

Oman and Qatar have better relations with the PLO, Jordan, and Israel. They have participated in the multilateral talks, and have adopted moderate policies towards Israel, he added.

Nigeria remains defiant over hangings of rights campaigners

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria remained defiant Sunday in the face of worldwide condemnation of the hangings of minority rights campaigners Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight kinsmen.

"The law has taken its full course," Lieutenant Colonel Dauda Komo, governor of the southeastern Rivers State, told the Thursday newspaper in an interview published Sunday.

"Four prominent Ogoni people were killed, it was murder," Col. Komo said. Saro-Wiwa, a prominent playwright, and eight members of his Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples (MOSOP) were sentenced to death by a tribunal over the murders in May 1994 of four pro-government Ogoni chiefs.

They were hanged Friday in defiance of international appeals for clemency on the grounds that the trial was flawed.

The world has firmly condemned the hangings and powerful Western nations have recalled their top diplomats from Nigeria.

The Commonwealth, the 52-strong club which groups Britain and its former colonies, promptly suspended Nigeria's membership and has set a two-year deadline for military ruler General Sani Abacha to restore democracy to the country.

Even some African states, wary of criticising internal affairs of their neighbours, have roundly condemned the hangings.

But angry Nigerian opposition groups have urged the international community to take more punitive steps

against the military government.

"The Nigerian people expect nothing less than the total isolation of the General Sani Abacha regime, seizure of all assets abroad of members of the Nigerian junta, their families and friends," Ayo Obe, national leader of the Civil Liberties Organisation, the leading human rights group in the west African state, said Saturday.

So far, the Nigerian government has shown no sign of a quick return to democracy.

Gen. Abacha's spokesman David Attah told BBC World Service Radio that Nigeria was sad and displeased at being suspended from the Commonwealth.

"We see it as most unfortunate, unfair and baseless, and it doesn't seem to approximate events and developments in Nigeria," he said.

Nigerian opposition groups have long demanded imposition of economic sanctions, including an embargo on Nigeria's crude oil, to force the military government to respect human rights and restore democracy which was aborted when the army annulled a presidential election in 1993.

But despite the international outrage at the execution it seemed unlikely the West would ban the flow of Nigerian oil, the country's economic lifeblood.

Oil is at the root of the Ogoni crisis.

Saro-Wiwa had long been campaigning for a fair share of income derived by the government from export of crude oil, some of which

was produced in Ogoniland. His MOSOP group has also been calling for self-determination for the 500,000 Ogoni people in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation of nearly 90 million people.

Ordinary Nigerians have expressed disgust at the executions but so far there have not been mass protests.

Sunday newspapers said a crowd of about 200 gathered at a rally called by radical Lagos lawyer Gani Fawehinmi Saturday to denounce the hangings but were dispersed by riot police.

Earlier Sunday, the Commonwealth set Nigeria a two-year deadline to reform or face expulsion as it gave new teeth to its principles on democracy and human rights.

"We would hope that in the period extending out two years we would see concrete evidence... concrete moves of Nigeria to move back to an acceptable approach to government," New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger said.

Leaders set the two-year deadline — until their next summit in Britain in 1997 — a day after taking the unprecedented step of suspending Nigeria for the hangings.

British Prime Minister John Major slapped a ban on military sales to Nigeria, which are already tightly restricted, and said he would urge others to follow suit.

The summit also decided to create a special action group of eight foreign ministers to deal with violations of democracy and human rights in member states.

"It will be the group's task to assess the nature of the infringement and recommend measures for collective Commonwealth action aimed at the speedy restoration of democracy and constitutional rule," leaders said in a statement.

Their moves were aimed at restoring credibility to the Commonwealth, two days after Nigeria ignored its pleas for clemency and executed Saro-Wiwa and eight associates.

"I think the suggestion of the Commonwealth's failure is inaccurate and wrong," said Mr. Bolger, hailing a new era for the organisation as a "vibrant gathering of nations".

Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating said the 52-strong club of Britain and its former colonies had "passed the test".

"The Commonwealth had to act, and the Commonwealth has acted," he told reporters.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad said Nigeria should show evidence of moves towards democracy within six months to a year. But he acknowledged the Commonwealth's clout was limited.

"The Commonwealth is without any power of enforcement. There is really very little we can do. So we have to send a message to them that this is not something we can accept," he said.

Mr. Bolger said leaders gave little consideration to sanctions against Nigeria, a major oil producer, as this was a matter for individual countries.



South African President Nelson Mandela (left) and Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating lay wreaths during the remembrance service at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting retreat near Queenstown, New Zealand (AFP photo)

Kohl arrives for China visit

BEIJING (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl arrived in Beijing Sunday at the start of a visit to China that has sparked controversy over his decision to place military cooperation on the agenda.

Mr. Kohl was welcomed at Beijing's capital airport by Minister of Machine-Building He Guangyuan and Deputy Foreign Minister Jiang Enzhu.

Avoiding the limousine motorcade that China traditionally accords to visiting leaders, Mr. Kohl climbed into a bus provided by Beijing's Capital Tax Co for the drive into the city.

He is to spend the day resting before launching his high-profile economic and political visit with a stream of meetings and talks with China's leaders Monday.

He is to meet President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Vice Premier Zhu Rongji, in charge of China's economic reforms.

The five-day trip is Mr. Kohl's fourth to China since he took office 13 years ago and is the latest in a flurry of visits between China and its biggest trade partner in Europe.

He is also placing military cooperation on the agenda with a visit to the showcase 196th Infantry Division in Tianjin.

The move has sparked accusations that he is restoring the good name of the Chinese Armed Forces that brutally crushed pro-democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Bonn government sources say Germany does not wish to normalise military relations with China — still subject to an EU arms embargo — and that the 196th Division took no part in the Tiananmen massacre.

They say Bonn simply wants to match the United States in its level of military cooperation with Beijing by exploring ways to work together on military medicine or training methods.

Speaking last week, Guenter Verheugen, parliamentary foreign affairs spokesman for the opposition Social Democrats, said it was "absolutely not normal for the host country's army to be visited during an official visit".

"Whether Kohl likes it or not, this raises the status of the army. It may even be seen in China itself as a kind of rehabilitation," he told, private radio station FFM.

Mr. Kohl is taking Economics Minister Guenter Rexrodt, Research Minister Juergen Rueggers and Post and Telecommunications Minister Wolfgang Boetsch on the 10-day Asian tour to China, Vietnam and Singapore, along with 45 top business leaders.

"I expect a new upswing in already excellent economic ties. I expect progress in the many big deals being negotiated, currently about 30," Mr. Rexrodt told German radio last week.

The deals with China could run into tens of billions of marks in the long run, he said.

He said Germany wanted more cooperation in high technology and to set up more joint ventures with small to medium-sized firms. But he declined to name firms that might be involved.

Japan guru accused of making LSD, guns

TOKYO (R) — Japanese police Sunday laid charges of manufacturing illegal drugs and automatic weapons against the leader of the doomsday cult accused of the nerve gas attack on Tokyo subways in March, a police spokesman said.

Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth Sect) leader Shoko Asahara, 40, was accused of ordering cult chemists to produce LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs to use along with poisonous gases to try to create urban chaos, the spokesman told Reuters.

The newest charges are the 10th set of offences laid against Asahara, who has been in police custody since May 16, after his arrest in connection with numerous

crimes, including the March 20 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system.

Asahara was to have gone on trial on Oct. 26 for the subway gas attack, in which 11 people died and about 5,000 were made ill, but the trial was postponed when he sacked his defence lawyer.

He has since reappointed counsel and is expected to go before a Tokyo court early next year. Asahara also faces murder charges connected to the execution-style killing of sect members who sought to quit his cult and the slaying in 1989 of a lawyer who pressed lawsuits against Aum Shinri Kyo.

The police spokesman said Sunday that Asahara also faced a separate charge of ordering cult members to

produce 1,000 automatic weapons modeled after the Soviet AK-47.

Police raids on sect compounds in the countryside west of Tokyo yielded a large number of gun parts, police said.

The latest charges came as Aum Shinri Kyo was fighting a court order to disband for violations of the law on religious organisations, which allows a court to dissolve a religious group that commits illegal acts that harm the public interest.

The Oct. 30 decision deprives the cult, which had 10,000 members in Japan and thousands more overseas, of tax breaks and financial privileges associated with a religious status.

Seoul prosecutors set stage for Roh's arrest

SEOUL (R) — State prosecutors set the stage Sunday for a possible arrest of South Korea's disgraced former President Roh Tae-woo by saying they had evidence he took bribes for favours from business groups during his term in office.

If arrested, Mr. Roh would become the first South Korean head of state, serving or retired, to face criminal action.

Mr. Roh has publicly confessed he amassed \$654 million during his 1988-1993 term in office and said he still kept \$242 million when he left the presidential Blue House. Roh also said accepting money from business groups was normal practice in the past.

Senior state prosecutor Ahn Kang-min, leading a probe into slush funds Mr. Roh amassed in office, told reporters Saturday prosecutors had evidence some business groups gave millions of dollars to Mr. Roh in return for favours.

"Yes, we have evidence that some business groups gave bribes to former President Roh to win major state projects," he said, making clear they believed Mr. Roh had broken the law.

This was the first time prosecutors had officially confirmed allegations business groups gave Mr. Roh bribes.

Mr. Ahn also said they were considering summoning Mr. Roh again this week. He did not say Mr. Roh would be arrested, but prosecutors have told local reporters in off-the-record background briefings Mr. Roh is likely to be held if he is summoned, as expected, towards the end of this week.

Prosecutors plan to finish questioning heads of conglomerates by Monday, resumption Mr. Roh sometime this week and arrest him for bribery," said the newspaper Dong-A Ilbo Sunday.

South Korean law sets long jail terms for public servants who accept bribes. Several dozen business heads who have been called in by prosecutors have admitted only to giving him money as no-strings-attached gifts, not as kickbacks for lucrative projects.

Some heads of business groups are also expected to face arrest for graft, a prosecution official said Sunday. But he declined further comment.

Kim Woo-Chong, the chairman of the giant Daewoo Group, arrived at the prosecutors' office Sunday evening. He is alleged to have helped Mr. Roh convert \$39 million in secret bank accounts into legitimate accounts.

"I will reveal everything to prosecutors," Mr. Kim said Sunday upon his arrival at the Seoul Kimpo Airport from an overseas business trip.

Meanwhile, prosecutors Sunday were still questioning Mr. Roh's brother Jae-woo. They are trying to find out if the brother, who appeared for questioning Saturday, helped Mr. Roh invest his ill-gotten fortune in property.

The brother is still being questioned. We believe that former President Roh bought property under the names of his brother and nephew," said the official.

He did not rule out the possibility of summoning Mr. Roh's son and nephew sometime this week.

The chairman of Sunkyong Chey Jong-Hyun, who is also a relative of Mr. Roh by marriage, was sent home early Sunday morning after being grilled for nearly 20 hours.

Millions of Britons silent for Armistice Day

LONDON (R) — Millions of Britons Saturday observed two minutes of silence to honour the dead of two world wars. Traffic ground to a halt and bus drivers stood in silence by the roadside. Betting shops halted gambling. National Lottery tills were silent and Harrods Department Store stopped trading. Even the England football team halted training in the buildup for their next international match. War veterans from the Royal British Legion had been backed by Prime Minister John Major in their campaign for a nationwide two-minute silence to commemorate the 1918 Armistice Day that ended World War I. The two-minute silence was well respected throughout the country and we are very pleased that so many people took this opportunity to reflect and remember," said Legion spokesman Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Dalton.

Miss Korea wins Miss Asia-Pacific crown

BAGUIO, Philippines (AFP) — Yoon Mi-Jung, a 21-year-old classical music student from South Korea, won the Miss Asia-Pacific title for 1995 at a colourful pageant in this northern resort city. Her victory late Saturday came as a surprise since she had rarely been mentioned as a favourite.

Ms. Yoon, who plays the cello, takes over from Jessica Tapia of Peru, who won the 1994 pageant. India's Ruchita Malhotra was crowned first runner-up, while Hsiao-Ping Chen of Taiwan was second runner-up in the contest which drew beauty queens from 27 Asia-Pacific countries.

Pilar Abed of Peru and Malaysia's Previa Thiya-garajah ended as third and fourth runners-up, respectively. Ms. Yoon said in answer to a question on the role today's woman she wanted to "give the best to my husband and family, and be a good wife."

She and Ms. Malhotra emotionally embraced after only two of them were left on the stage before the winner was announced. After the Indian beauty was named second runner-up, pandemonium broke as dozens of photographers jostled for the winner's picture.

Ms. Yoon, the eldest of two children of Seoul businessman Yoon Tu, won \$10,000 cash and other prizes. Her mother, who accompanied her to the Philippines, described the five-foot, nine-inch beauty as a "good daughter."

That wasn't high C he missed — it was only a B

NEW YORK (AP) — Turns out Luciano Pavarotti, the king of the high C's, gave up his crown some time ago without telling anyone. The 60-year-old tenor wasn't even trying for that lofty note last Saturday night at the Metropolitan Opera when he sang the role of Tonio in Donizetti's "L'Elisir d'Amore".

The Regiment, the part that made him a superstar 24 years ago. Without informing his adoring public, he had transposed the fiendishly difficult aria "pour mes amis" a half-tone lower to make it easier to sing. He duly hit all the high notes, which were actually B naturals. It didn't work during the second performance, Wednesday.

His voice cracked on a B and he gave way to an understudy at intermission. Though musically the difference is just a half-tone, symbolically the gulf is vast. High C has become one of the supreme hurdles for operatic tenors — the equivalent of the four-minute mile (1.6 kilometers) for runners, the note that can make the difference between a modest career and great one.

Azeris go to polls in controversial general election

BAKU (AFP) — Voters in Azerbaijan went to the polls Sunday to elect the country's first post-Soviet parliament but four main opposition parties were excluded from standing.

The voters are also to pass judgment on a new constitution which would significantly expand the powers of ex-Communist President Geydar Aliyev.

The exclusion of four main opposition parties on technical grounds cast uncertainty over the election even before a single ballot was cast. Opposition leaders in the Caucasus republic have denounced the election as a farce.

A Popular Front (PF) official said moreover Sunday that ballot scrutineers from the opposition had been refused entry to several polling stations, while at the end of October four journalists — including two PF candidates — and two other employees of an opposition paper were arrested and sentenced to terms of hard labour for publishing "defamatory" portraits of the president.

In an apparent conciliatory gesture, Mr. Aliyev announced Sunday the six had been pardoned.

No preliminary turnout figures had been released by 2 p.m. (1000 GMT) but an official at Azerbaijan's Central Electoral Commission cited a participation rate of between 30 and 50 per cent in the country's regions.

A 50-per cent turnout is required for the controversial vote to be valid.

Observers from the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) noted "some problems" with the vote but believed no dramatic violations had taken place, a source at the international observer mission said.

The 4.26 million Azeris are eligible to vote for the 125 members of the Milli Medjlis, or parliament — 25 seats by proportional representation, 100 by majority vote in constituencies.

The electorate will also decide on a referendum on a new constitution strengthening the powers of Mr.

Aliyev, Azerbaijan's Brezhnev-era leader who returned to take over the reins of power in the oil-rich republic two years ago.

Mr. Aliyev, 72, hailed the poll Sunday as he cast his vote here, welcomed at the polling station by children in traditional Azeri costume.

"This is a historic day, the first in the history of Azerbaijan where we ourselves have the possibility of resolving our problems in a sovereign manner," Mr. Aliyev said.

"I hope, from the bottom of my heart, that the vote passes in a democratic fashion."

Eight parties are registered for the proportional voting and there are 387 candidates for the 100 constituency seats.

The Popular Front of former President Abulfaz Elchibey, overthrown in June 1993, is the only opposition party in the proportional poll, in which Mr. Aliyev's own Eni Azerbaijan is favourite.

But four opposition parties have been excluded from elections, prompting

opposition leaders to accuse Mr. Aliyev of manipulating the poll in his favour.

Voters will also be considering the country's new draft constitution, denounced by opposition figures as a presidential scheme to turn parliament into a mere rubber-stamp for Mr. Aliyev's decisions.

But Mr. Aliyev has said the new basic law will respect democratic principles and also help speed a settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict "by demonstrating to the entire world that the rights of the Armenian minority in Karabakh will be respected."

Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave within Azerbaijan populated mostly by ethnic Armenians, has been riven by six years of war triggered by Armenian demands for secession.

Seven seats have been reserved in the new parliament for the approximately one million Azeri refugees who have fled the conflict.

S. Korea gives Japan deadline to sack minister

SEOUL (R) — Seoul gave Tokyo a two-day deadline to sack a minister who made offensive remarks about Japan's colonial rule or face cancellation of a summit and a recall of its ambassador, Yonhap News Agency said Sunday.

Seoul wants Management and Coordination Agency Minister Takami Eto sacked by Tuesday at the latest, before the opening of an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum in Osaka. Yonhap quoted an unnamed diplomat source as saying.

Japan's Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam are scheduled to meet in Osaka.

"The Seoul-Tokyo diplomatic row over Eto's controversial remarks will meet a crucial moment Monday or Tuesday," Yonhap quoted the source as saying.

"If Japan fails to dismiss Eto by then, and the Kim-Murayama summit is consequently called off, Seoul will have no option but to recall Ambassador Kim."

Foreign Ministry officials were not immediately available for comment on the threat to the summit or the recall of Ambassador Kim Tae-Zhee.

South Korea first threatened Saturday to put off the summit unless Tokyo fired Mr. Eto, who set off a storm by saying Japan did "good things" during its colonial rule over the Korean peninsula.

Japan's Foreign Minister Yohei Kono late Friday dropped plans to visit South Korea Saturday after Seoul angrily rejected his trip as "meaningless."

South Korea was already smarting from comments by Murayama who said Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 that began 35 years of brutal colonial rule was legally valid.

"Minister Eto's remarks erupted even before we had time to soothe our anger over Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's earlier remark. This time we cannot just let it pass," Kim Ha-Jung, director-general of the Asia Bureau in the

Foreign Ministry, was quoted by the Dong-A Ilbo Sunday as saying.

"The ball is now in Japan's court," he said.

The Korea Herald said South Korea was taking a hard stance against Japan because of the "determination to use the dismissal of Mr. Eto to put a lid on remarks repeated by Japanese politicians advocating Japan's colonial rule of Korea."

But it will not be easy to get rid of Mr. Eto since he is a member of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party, the biggest partner in his coalition that includes a powerful lobby opposing any apologies for Japan's past aggression.

Mr. Murayama was forced to back down from his comments, which were seen as a whitewash of Japanese wartime aggression, saying the annexation accord was signed on an "unequal footing."

The furor triggered fierce criticisms from both South and North Korea where bitter memories remain of

colonial rule, which ended in 1945 with Tokyo's defeat in World War II.

An annual meeting of parliamentarians from South Korea and Japan was indefinitely postponed and President Kim warned Japan to make a full apology for atrocities against Koreans.

Japan "erected schools and universities and substantially raised the level of education, laid 5,000 kilometres of railroads, conducted irrigation, improved port facilities and planted trees in the hills" during its 1910-45 rule, Mr. Eto said.

He apologised for his comments but Seoul said it was not enough.

Communist North Korea's Rodong Sinmun condemned Saturday Mr. Eto's remark saying the "Japanese imperialists enforced colonial education in Korea only to strangle the national education, and their building of railway and harbours only served the plundering of more local resources afterwards."

World
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(R) — Millions of Britons observed the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on Saturday. The day was marked by a series of events across the country, including a parade in London and a service at the Houses of Parliament. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Middle East, including a service in Jerusalem and a parade in Tel Aviv. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Pacific, including a service in Tokyo and a parade in Manila. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Caribbean, including a service in Havana and a parade in Santo Domingo. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Americas, including a service in Mexico City and a parade in Lima. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Asia-Pacific region, including a service in Beijing and a parade in Seoul. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Middle East, including a service in Jerusalem and a parade in Tel Aviv. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Pacific, including a service in Tokyo and a parade in Manila. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Caribbean, including a service in Havana and a parade in Santo Domingo. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Americas, including a service in Mexico City and a parade in Lima. The day was also marked by a series of events in the Asia-Pacific region, including a service in Beijing and a parade in Seoul.



Residents and rescue workers carry a wounded man away from the site of a powerful bomb blast near Sri Lankan army headquarters in Colombo (AFP photo)

Kremlin disturbed by failure to end Chechenya war

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian leaders are troubled by the failure to end the 11-month-old war in Chechenya and are pushing to end it soon, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Friday. Even as he spoke, however, the Russian military was reporting stepped-up conflicts involving Chechen fighters, saying the rebels had used mortars and heavy weapons against Russian troops. Mr. Chernomyrdin said he and President Boris Yeltsin were extremely disturbed by the continuing clashes. "We are now doing everything we can to end the conflict as quickly as possible," he said, according to the ITAR-TASS news agency. "I don't want to forecast the exact time limits, but we have recently agreed on several radical decisions and have done much to end the conflict in the Chechen Republic and to stabilise the situation there." Speaking to a gathering at the unveiling of a memorial to 38 Russian servicemen who were killed during a time of peace, he urged law enforcement bodies to "subdue the murky wave of criminal encroachments" in Chechenya. He added: "We shall not allow any war against the Chechen people. But proper counter-actions will be taken against the irreconcilable armed formations." The war began last December when Mr. Yeltsin sent tens of thousands of troops into Chechenya to end its three years of self-declared independence. Tensions have escalated in Chechenya since the top Russian commander, Anatoly Romanov, was seriously injured in a bomb attack early last month. Despite the hostilities, an electoral official in Chechenya's Russian-installed government maintained Friday that the republic will hold elections for Russian parliament like the rest of the nation on Dec. 17. A July military accord providing for rebel disarmament and partial Russian withdrawal has collapsed. Nightly clashes rock Chechenya and efforts to renew peace talks have failed. Movlen Solanov, assistant to Chechenya's separatist president, Dzhokhar Dudayev, told ITAR-TASS Friday that peace talks can resume "only if there are firm guarantees of non-resumption of hostilities with international control."

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Major rejects criticism over N. Ireland

AUCKLAND (R) — British Prime Minister John Major rejected Irish criticism Sunday that his intransigence was blocking the Northern Ireland peace process and pointed the finger of blame firmly at the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein. Mr. Major was responding to a call Saturday by Irish Prime Minister John Bruton for Britain to drop its insistence on making all-party peace talks dependent on disarming Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas and to back a reasonable compromise. Speaking at Auckland Airport at the end of a visit to New Zealand for the biennial Commonwealth summit, Mr. Major's annoyance with Mr. Bruton was plain. He said Britain and Ireland had prepared an extremely good compromise on the key issue of handing in weapons, but Dublin had pulled out at the eleventh hour from a summit in September that was meant to endorse the plan. "It wasn't the British government that backed away. It was the Irish government that didn't proceed with that meeting because it came under pressure from Sinn Fein and other people," Mr. Major said. He said he knew Mr. Bruton was under heavy domestic pressure to make progress on talks to cement 14 months of fragile peace in Northern Ireland but insisted Britain was not at fault. Mr. Major put the onus squarely on the IRA and Sinn Fein, which want to reunite the British-ruled province with the predominantly Catholic Irish Republic to the south. Parties representing Northern Ireland's promise British Protestant majority would simply not agree to talks until the IRA handed in the arms with which it fought British rule for 25 years before it declared a truce in September 1994, Mr. Major said. "The problem above all lies with Sinn Fein and Sinn Fein's complete reluctance to tackle the question, even with an international body, of how their arsenal of weapons and explosives are going to be taken out of commission," he said. Britain has proposed an international panel to advise on ways of handling the weapons issue. Sinn Fein has rejected the idea, saying disarmament is a subject for the talks it wants. "The blockage is theirs and no weasel words to the contrary will change that hard reality," Mr. Major said. He accused Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness of hindering the chance of talks by issuing veiled threats if they do not get their way. "What is not a starter is for people to make it clear that they would resort to violence if they don't get their way in talks and then expect to be admitted to talks... That isn't on," Mr. Major said. The long-distance slanging match underscores the increasingly fragile nature of the peace process in Northern Ireland, just two weeks before U.S. President Bill Clinton visits the province. Two huge car bombs were discovered Friday that security sources believe were meant for an attack on a British army base. Ownership of the bombs was claimed by a hardline Irish Republican splinter group that broke away from mainstream Sinn Fein in 1986.

52 missing in Nepal's worst avalanche disaster

KATHMANDU (AFP) — At least 52 trekkers were missing and feared dead Sunday following three avalanches in the Himalayas in Nepal's worst avalanche disasters ever. The missing were believed to be of many nationalities, including Britons, Canadians, French, Germans and Japanese, though little information was immediately available from the remote areas, police said. Rescue workers sent helicopters after land searches proved futile, police said. Nepal authorities put rescue efforts on a war footing with both army and police personnel participating. At least 26 people — 13 Japanese trekkers and 13 Nepalese porters — were feared dead in an avalanche early Saturday which hit their lodge in Gokyo about 22 kilometres northwest of Namche Bazar near Mount Everest, police said. There were 54 people camping in Gokyo when the avalanche occurred but the fate of the others was not immediately known. Another 18 were reported missing in an avalanche late Friday further north of Gokyo. This group was believed to include British, French and German trekkers, authorities said. Eight trekkers, including at least one Canadian, were feared dead after they were buried under heavy snow late Friday in the Mustang area, 375 kilometres northwest of Kathmandu, police said. Seventy-eight people, including 43 foreign trekkers, were airlifted late Saturday and early Sunday from the Gokyo area by Asian Airlines and Nepal Airways, which used the Syangboche Airport in the region, police said. "Another group of 150 trekkers and local Sherpa porters were seen from the rescue helicopter moving towards Gokyo Valley digging through deep snow," police said in a statement, adding snow was nearly two-and-a-half metres (8 feet) deep. "The trekkers in the Everest region are facing a food shortage and warm clothes and whatever little they had in their rucksacks were lost in the avalanche," the message said. Mountaineering guide Ang Gyalzen Sherpa said avalanches killing mountaineers were always a risk but "the death of so many trekkers much below the Himalayan foothills like in Gokyo Valley is quite rare." heavy snow Friday and Saturday and high winds were blamed. Rescue helicopters left here Sunday morning to comb the foothills of Everest and were expected to return late Sunday afternoon, said a spokesman for Trans Himalayan Travel and Tour, which handled the trekking tour for the 26 people missing at the Gokyo Lodge. The worst previous avalanche in Nepal occurred in 1972 when 14 climbers, mostly South Koreans, died following an avalanche on the 8,163 metre (26780 foot) Mount Manaslu, the world's eighth tallest peak, officials said. The second worst mountain accident occurred last November when 11 climbers — nine Germans, one Swiss and a Nepalese guide — died on Pisang peak.

Snipers kill two in Karachi shootings

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Gunmen shot and killed two police officers and four other people in the violence-wracked southern Pakistani city of Karachi, a police spokesman said Sunday. The two policemen and one of the civilians were killed in sniper fire in separate incidents late Saturday night in the city's Western Orangi district. The three other victims — one of whom was allegedly a member of the opposition Mohajir Qaumi Movement — were killed in central Karachi also in separate sniper attacks. No one has claimed responsibility for the killings, but authorities blame extremists from the MQM for the deaths of the police officers. For months Karachi has been shattered by ethnic clashes between the city's majority Mohajir population and authorities. More than 60 people have been killed so far this month, including 15 who were gunned down in an execution-style mass murder. The violence stems from a growing rift between Karachi's majority Mohajir population and the government. Mohajirs, or Indian Muslims, came to Pakistan when the country was established in 1947. Although they form the largest ethnic group in Karachi, they say they face widespread discrimination. The MQM has accused the government of violence against Mohajirs and says they are treated like second class citizens. Police say the MQM has turned to more and more violent methods to press for their demand of equal rights. Policemen have become a favoured target of gunmen linked to the MQM.

Sri Lanka army captures rebel underground base

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan troops attacking the northern Tamil rebel stronghold of Jaffna captured an underground base as police conducted a sweep of Colombo after suicide bombings, security sources said Sunday. "With superior firepower troops overcame attempts by terrorists to delay the advance, causing heavy casualties to the terrorists," a military statement said of the Jaffna fighting. "Preparations and reconnaissance for further operations are in progress," it added. Rebel underground complexes found by troops in Kopai were being cleared and small arms, anti-tank mines and locally made mortar launchers were also captured, the statement said. Tiger guerrillas, fighting a fierce rearguard action to defend Jaffna City, lost some 70 fighters Saturday, raising their death toll to more than 250 since the army resumed their push Friday after a two-week lull, military sources said. Rebel fortifications in the area, among the last lines of the rebels' defence of Jaffna, were destroyed, they said. "There were several confrontations as our troops pushed forward," a senior army officer told Reuters. "We lost 15 men and had 84 wounded." Troops converging on Jaffna City on two axes of advance from their Palaly Air Base advanced two kilometres south of Urumpirai as well as south-east of Kopai Junction, the military statement said. Jaffna residents, who arrived in Vavuniya, the northernmost town under government control, said the rebels claimed to have destroyed a tank. In Colombo, already under a tight security blanket, more roadblocks were set up and hundreds of people questioned over the attacks by the suicide bombers, one of them a woman, in which 15 people, mostly civilians, died and more than 50 were wounded. One of the bombers tried to enter army headquarters while the other blew himself up nearby. "The two appear to have come alone," Colombo Police Chief G.B. Kotakadeniya told Reuters. "They may have been waiting for an army VIP and may have had a deadline. We did a massive sweep of the city. Two suspects have been detained." The armed forces chief kept away from Sunday's Remembrance Day ceremonies to commemorate the island's war dead after the two suicide bombings, in which army chief Lieutenant General Gerry De Silva may have been the target, security sources said. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels have sent several hit squads to try to assassinate military chiefs as government troops close in on Jaffna in the biggest offensive of the 12-year war, the sources said. Most of the town's civilian residents have fled, joining between 100,000 and 500,000 refugees camped at Chavakachcheri, east of Jaffna City, and south across the Jaffna Lagoon in and around Kilinochchi on the mainland. The army, which launched the current offensive against the rebels on Oct. 17, is advancing on strategic points near Jaffna, the heart of the would-be homeland the rebels are fighting for in the island's north and east. More than 50,000 people have died in the war. The army says more than 1,300 rebels have been killed and 4,000 wounded in the latest offensive. The army has lost more than 300 soldiers and had over 1,800 wounded. In eastern Batticaloa, eight police commandos died when rebels ambushed their patrol Saturday, the statement said. Police said the arrest last Sunday of two Catholic priests for trying to smuggle banned goods and money into the rebel-held north provided evidence that churchmen were helping guerrillas. "No doubt the church is an accomplice," a senior police officer told Reuters. "This is nothing new. Even on previous occasions we found the church giving support to the rebels." A church spokesman said the church gave the money at the priests' request to help refugees.

Shuttle Atlantis blasts off on Russian mission

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — Space shuttle Atlantis punched through low clouds Sunday on its return mission to Russia's orbiting station, this time with a docking port and construction crew. NASA had feared bad weather at the shuttle emergency landing strips across the Atlantic might delay the flight for the second day in a row, but skies cleared sufficiently at one of the touch-down sites in Spain. Atlantis rose from its sea-side pad at 7:30 a.m. (1230 GMT), after the Russian space station Mir soared 395 kilometres (245 miles) above. The shuttle slipped into orbit eight minutes later. "We hope you have a good ride up to Mir," NASA test director Bill Dowdell told the astronauts just before liftoff. "Sorry we had to do this twice, but I think we're ready now and everything looks good," replied shuttle Commander Kenneth Cameron.

Bangladesh ferry disaster claims 75 lives

DHAKA (R) — At least 75 people were missing feared drowned after a crowded ferry capsized in northern Bangladesh and some 200 fishermen were still missing following a severe coastal storm, officials said Sunday. As relatives continued searching for fishermen missing after a storm last Thursday in the Bay of Bengal, a ferry carrying 175 people trying to reach a flood relief centre sank Saturday. "About 100 people swam ashore or were picked up by other boats. But the rest are feared to have drowned," one official told reporters Sunday. Almost 24 hours after the boat capsized on the northern Teesta River, rescuers have retrieved only one body, officials said. They said the ferry was caught in a strong current on its way to reach a relief centre where flood survivors collect their weekly government ration. "This is particularly shocking because the victims were expecting to grab food for their families," said one official in the district of Rangpur. Witnesses said the small ferry was overcrowded. "The ferry's operators could not resist people trying to board it. They were desperate not to miss it," one witness told reporters. Fishing community leaders in Cox's Bazar told reporters meanwhile that a freighter picked up 12 fishermen alive from the sea Saturday but about 200 others caught in Thursday's storm had still not been found. Bangladesh does not have a Coast Guard and searches are carried out by relatives of missing fishermen, fishing community leader Ekramul Hossain Chowdhury said Sunday. He said hopes of the fishermen being found alive were fading and the search might be called off soon.



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Time for bold moves

A POLL published by an Israeli daily Friday indicates that 74 per cent of Israelis support Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his determination to implement all aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian accords, including the Oslo II deal. The results of this poll represent a significant shift in the Israeli public opinion, which, on the eve of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was evenly divided on the issue. It is not clear, so far, whether the public mood would influence the Israeli Knesset which was almost evenly split on Oslo II with 61 members voting in favour and 59 against the deal.

It is not clear, however, whether the shift in the Israeli public opinion is the result of a genuine change of heart on the peace process or a temporary reaction created by the shock with which the Israeli society is dealing after the assassination of Mr. Rabin.

Mr. Peres could be still riding on the crest of the sympathy vote that developed in the aftermath of Israel's first political assassination. But if the overwhelming vote of confidence in the peace talks with Palestinians turns out to be lasting, then the legacy of Mr. Rabin would bear fruit. Most probably, though, the aftershocks of the assassination will prove to be deep and profound enough to sway most Israelis in support of a comprehensive regional peace. When many Israelis begin to view the extremist amongst them as the real enemy, then a real transformation in Israeli public opinion will certainly materialise, strengthening the hands of Mr. Peres and his government.

It must have dawned on the greater majority of Israelis that Jewish fundamentalism and fanaticism are no different from extremism on the other side of the fence. Extremists are one and the same no matter where they are situated and irrespective of their origin. As long as most Israelis keep on remembering that the enemies of peace are also their enemies, there will be real hope for peace in the Middle East.

We therefore hope that Mr. Peres and his team would seize the opportunity made possible by a weakened camp of Israeli rejectionists to push the peace process forward. Now, it seems, is the time to make bold moves for building peace on all fronts, especially the Syrian one.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Rai daily Sunday criticised Jordanian theatre groups who present satire and comedy performances on stage indirectly showing displeasure with peace. Youssef Ghazou said that peace is sought by the people of this region who have been tired of wars and are yearning for security, stability and construction. What is the point on presenting satirical comedies criticising the peace process at Jordanian theatres? asked the writer. Those who reject peace for no reason resemble those who refuse to have fresh air and oxygen.

lands, said the writer. Democracy opens the way for people to say no to peace when peace is not based on the principles of justice, but does not advocate continued hostilities in this region, stressed the writer. He said it is the enemies of mankind and those who are devoid of all human feelings and senses continue to act as war mongers and calling for the shedding of blood because such situation could serve their own selfish interests. The writer said that cultural activities, including plays in the Jordanian theatres, ought to be dedicated to serving the real interests of the Jordanian people and the Arab Nation.

NAWAF ZARU, a writer in Al Dustour, directed attention to Iraq, criticising the latest extension of the U.N. embargo on the Arab country as an unjustified act. The writer said that the five year embargo seems directly connected with the interests of the United States, which has total hegemony on the U.N. Security Council and its resolutions and not related to Iraq's abidance by the council's resolutions. While holding on to an excuse that Iraq is producing weapons of mass destruction, the council and the world community continues to ignore the fact that Israel is far ahead of Iraq in its continued nuclear programmes, said the writer. He said while the Security Council claims to be imposing penalty on Iraq for waging war on Kuwait, it is totally condoning Israel's acts of aggression on the Arab countries in the past decades.

Human Rights File

By Dr. Waleed Sa'di

'Germany goes too far in defending freedom of expression'

THE HIGHEST court in Germany ruled few days ago that expressing the view that "soldiers are murderers" is a right protected under the principle of free speech. I find this extension of the right to free expression and free speech unwarranted to say the least. It is one thing to express a view against militarism or armament but to state in categorical terms that all members of the armed forces are killers or murderers is something that should not be tolerated or protected by law.

Almost all of the democratic countries of the world offer alternative service to conscientious objectors who for religious or even ideological reasons refuse military service. This much is quite defensible and protected under international human rights law. But to go as far as depicting people who accept or choose to serve their country in its armed forces as murderers is tantamount to oversteering the right to freedom of speech or expression and can be expected to draw a backlash against this right in due course.

In order to guard freedoms and sustain them in the long run, these freedoms must be pursued, practised and defended in a sensible and reasonable way. Of all citizens, army personnel deserve a special treatment because they often put their lives on the line for the security and stability of their respective nations. That is why many advanced states accord their soldiers the right to vote and this principle has become a strongly entrenched right in international law.

Normally if a person says or writes that soldiers are murderers, each and every soldier would automatically acquire a right to take such a person to task by instituting a case against him or her in a court of law on grounds of libel or defamation. A class action can be lodged to court on behalf of all affected soldiers and damages can be collected on this basis. What the ruling of the high court of Germany purports to do now is to take away even this modest claim for reparation and redress by making such utterances or expressions lawful. In other words, instead of increasing the rights of soldiers for adequate remedies, the German court decided to wipe them off completely.

Germany occupies the central stage in Europe and what it courts rule will undoubtedly have ripple effects on the entire European continent. That is why efforts must be made to contain the negative side effects of this latest judicial decision by resorting to two avenues that are still available for its rectification. The first option is to submit a complaint to the Human Rights Committee (HRC) on Civil and Political Rights by German soldiers affected by the ruling. Under the Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the committee has a mandate to look into individual complaints of persons alleging violations of their rights under the ICCPR. A decision by the committee on this point would be legally binding for Germany, including its highest court. In other words any judgement rendered by the committee on this issue to the contrary would effectively reverse the German decision and render it voidable.

True the procedures of the HRC are too slow. First the members would have to decide whether to accept the

consideration of the issue brought up for their attention. The committee would have to examine if the complaint raises a question under the provisions of the ICCPR. Then it would declare the submission admissible. This procedure takes sometimes years during which the state party as well as the plaintiff would be repeatedly asked to respond to each other's points of view. When there is only an issue of law under examination, the committee would be better positioned to make a ruling. When there are issues of fact that have strong bearings on the case or issues of law, the committee often feels incapacitated to act since it lacks an independent machinery to establish the facts surrounding the complaint. As can be imagined, the process of examining submissions becomes unduly long and tedious. Still at the end of the day, perhaps two years hence, there could be a committee decision that is mandatory on the country in question.

The second recourse available to a complainant is to go to the European Human Rights Court in Strasbourg where the European Convention of Human Rights could be invoked to seek redress from the German decision. The procedures of the court are likewise long and many months if not years would elapse before a judgement is rendered. Unlike the HRC, though, the European Court allows for the presence of the complainant in person during its deliberations or through a lawyer of his choosing. This makes its proceeding closer to judicial processes than its international counterpart. The European Court as well as the Human Rights Committee, however, have both already ample jurisprudence on freedom of expression and no doubt would render judgements that are based on relevant law and international jurisprudence.

Other than that, the international community as well as Germany would be stuck with an interpretation of the freedom of expression that goes way beyond the realm of reason and common sense. One cannot describe another person as a killer or criminal when the laws of his land not only legalise military service but also make it compulsory, especially in times of war. It is hard to comprehend what exactly went through the minds of the German judges who pronounced themselves on this point. Obviously there were some dissenting opinions who did not want to go as far in defending freedom of expression. The result, though, could be alarming to all states which are flirting with the policy of expanding freedom of expression. We all have seen how too liberal a construction of freedom of expression in Israel has led to a climate of hate and violence that culminated in the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Closer to home, His Majesty King Hussein has drawn attention to this problem in his speech to senior officers of the armed and security forces few days ago. We really have to be very careful about how far we want to go in expanding freedom of expression. We certainly do not wish to go as far as Germany or Israel for that matter in this vein. Yet we must not allow our legitimate concerns disrupt the basic tenets and objectives of free press. Free and responsible press is, the corner stone of all democracies. It is one thing to put a lid on undue liberalisation of this pillar of democracy and quite another to suffocate it altogether.



Rabin was right, so let the majority's silence end

By Thomas L. Friedman

WASHINGTON — I desperately want to write a column saying that despite the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel, the peace process between Israel and the Arabs will survive. I am not sure.

The reason is that this is a case where the death of one man really can make an enormous difference. It was only Yitzhak Rabin, among contemporary Israeli leaders, who had the credibility and courage to sell the peace treaty with (Palestinian leader) Yasser Arafat to the Israeli public.

Israel's foreign minister, Shimon Peres, deserves enormous credit for having the initial vision to see the possibility for a breakthrough between Israel and the Palestinians, and to push Mr. Rabin in that direction. But it was Mr. Rabin who, once convinced that Mr. Arafat was ready to deal, persuaded Israelis that they could trade land for peace with their mortal enemy. They would not have bought the deal from anyone else.

There are two reasons. One is that Mr. Rabin was the Israeli everyman. He was deeply in touch with

the soul of the great Israeli silent majority. His gruff, no-nonsense approach to life epitomised the personality of the native-born Israeli Sabra. He did not take any flak from anyone.

And like the Israeli silent majority Prime Minister Rabin always made clear that he was making peace with the Palestinians not because he liked them but because he believed that it was the best way to guarantee a secure and prosperous Israel, because he believed that Israelis would never be able to feel at home unless the Palestinians did as well.

Having just spent two weeks travelling through the Middle East, I am convinced that the peace process that Mr. Rabin so boldly helped to set in motion is very real — but now we are going to find out just how real.

One thing I learned a long time ago is that sometimes the news is in the noise and sometimes the news is in the silence, and the real story in the Middle East since Sept. 13, 1993, when Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat shook hands at the White House, has been the silence with which the vast majority of Israelis and Palestinians accepted this

peace and wanted to see it go forward.

The people who heard that silence most loudly, the people who were driven crazy by that silence, were the extremists in both communities. The Jewish and Muslim fanatics. They heard the silence within their communities and decided that they had to do something about it — to make sure that this peace process did not go forward.

They knew that to break through the silence they had to engage in something more than garden-variety terrorism. They had to engage in acts of violence so unspeakable that they might be able to create a tit-for-tat situation that would unravel the new relationship between Israelis and Arabs.

For two years the Jewish and Muslim fanatics tried their best, with suicide bombs and killings in a mosque, but they could not stop the process. The silent majorities were too strong. So now they have gone to a new extreme. Instead of killing each other, and hoping that it would explode the peace, they have begun to kill their own.

I saw Mr. Rabin 10 days ago. We spent an hour together sitting in his Tel

Aviv office schmoozing about the peace process. In his low-key manner he thanked me for a column I had written in defence of what he was doing.

As always, he smoked like a chimney. He looked thin and worn down. But the one thing that struck me was the contrast between his physical appearance and the words he spoke, which were steady, brimming with vigor and more committed than ever to going forward with the Palestinians.

When a friend asked me later how I found Mr. Rabin, I said that he struck me as "a man on a mission." He knew just where he was going, and he was ready to take any heat to get there, and he did not care whom he offended along the way, because he was sure in his soul that what he was doing was best for Israel and the Jewish people.

I know he was right, and I pray that the Israeli silent majority he represented so well will find a way to complete his courageous mission. Good-bye, Yitzhak. I will forever be proud to tell my children and my children's children that we were friends.

The New York Times.

Three good things about Russia

By Gwynne Dyer

BORIS YELTSIN is in hospital again, and looking less and less likely to be a candidate in Russia's presidential election next April. Average Russian per capita income, in terms of purchasing power, is about half what it was when the Soviet Union died in 1991. Parliamentary elections are due on Dec. 17. What if the Communists come back? Moscow is quite grim this autumn, with Mr. Yeltsin staggering (in several senses of the word) to the end of his term, and the Communist Party leading all others in the polls. But here are three hopeful signs that democracy is going to survive in Russia.

The first is precisely the fact that Boris Yeltsin is in hospital again, for the second time this year. He gave Russia political stability while it went through the most painful economic upheavals of the post-Soviet era, but he has outlived his usefulness. If Mr. Yeltsin's pride and his entourage won't allow him to quit, maybe his ailing heart will now force him to.

Mr. Yeltsin is no mere clown, but he was never an intellectual giant either. And back in the late 80s, when he suddenly became famous by winning 68 per cent of the vote in the all-Moscow constituency against the official Communist Party candidate, Russia's democratic opposition went into shock.

They realised with horror that this apparition from the Urals was bound to become president of Russia as soon as free elections were held. He, not they, held the key to the future. So they took a brave and brilliant gamble. They made him their leader — on condition that he learn their democratic ideals and principles.

Mr. Yeltsin was an empty vessel, an ex-Marxist trained in the Party schools. He was ready to be filled up with the first plausible doctrine that anybody poured into him. So the Inter-Regional Deputies' Group (as the democratic opposition in the Soviet parliament was then called) literally ran a rota on him. For months, you never saw him alone.

Morning, noon and night, in the basement cafeteria of the Supreme Soviet or in the hotel bars and restaurants around Revolution Square, you would see Mr. Yeltsin flanked by one of the leading lights of the democratic opposition — Sergei Stankevich, Galina Starovirova, even Andrei Sakharov himself — always engaged in teaching him about democratic principles.

Several of those people said to me quite openly in 1990 that Mr. Yeltsin's job was to spend his huge popularity to get Russia over the hump of democratisation. I did not know Mr. Yeltsin well, but in several conversations at the time I got the impression that he himself understood that that was his historical role.

Of course, he has changed his entourage several times since then: first the bright young economic reformers, and later his old apparition cronies from his home town of Sverdlovsk. He has spent all his popularity, and barely beats Gorbachev in the polls. But he has got Russia over the worst of the transition.

Inflation is now down to 50 per cent a year, Moscow streets are jammed with new cars, and even industrial production may start to recover this year. It is time for Mr. Yeltsin to go, however, and maybe he even knows it. But he can't go, partly because those around him now would not survive his fall.

"I don't think Yeltsin really wants to run for president (again)," Sergei Markov of the Carnegie Institute for Peace said recently, "but there are corrupt forces on his team who owe their livelihood to him."

They know that if the opposition forces come to power they will be pushed... into prison."

Mr. Yeltsin doesn't know how to quit, but his failing health may now take the decision out of his hands. That would allow more credible leaders like Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the centre-right Yabloko Party, to mobilise pro-democracy forces for the coming elections.

Otherwise, the Communists are likely to win in December — but here's the second good thing: the Russian Communists are not that bad any more. They are not as completely reformed as the ex-Communists who returned to power as 'socialists' in Lithuania, Hungary and Poland in the past two years. But under the leadership of Gennady Zyuganov they have moved away from Russian nationalism and pan-Slavism, effectively rejecting an alliance with the hard right in the so-called 'red-brown coalition'.

"Mr. Yeltsin doesn't know how to quit, but his failing health may now take the decision out of his hands. That would allow more credible leaders like Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the centre-right Yabloko Party, to mobilise pro-democracy forces for the coming elections."

Instead, they have repositioned themselves as the soft-headed defenders of the underdogs. "There used to be a huge part of our society who lived not too prosperously but in absolute security. They have lost everything now and we have to take care of them," says Zyuganov — and it is those 80 million people whom he sees as the electoral basis for a comeback.

But it would be an electoral comeback, temporary and reversible. Even if the Communists and their Agrarian allies get a parliamentary majority on Dec. 17, they are unlikely to tamper fundamentally with the economic reforms or with democracy.

And the third good thing? Well, you probably heard that Nobel Prize-winner Russian dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn, famous for his diatribes about how the decadent West has undermined traditional Russian values, got a chat show on Russian TV — when he went home from his Vermont exile six months ago.

After a few months the old ranter stopped bothering with guests, and just devoted his full programme to haranguing his viewers about the iniquities of the free market and democracy, the need for pan-Slavic unity, and other familiar right-wing obsessions. So the viewers voted with their feet, and last month the network pulled the plug on Mr. Solzhenitsyn.

The nationalist extreme right in Russia is in retreat, and though the Communists are making a comeback, they are just another party now. Mr. Yeltsin has done the job — and if his health gives him the pretext to retire from the scene before the elections, the moderates might even win them.

feature
Bill Hayton
THE breeze blow-
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Rundar Abbas bear-
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King attends
Landed from page 11
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south, for young men
women, the opportunity
higher education, of
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you can continue the future
and the life's challenges
aged with knowledge and
good education." King Hus-
said
Together we have stood
firm in defence of the land
and in consequence in the
face of all odds we have now
created the safe zone we
are preparing to move there
for a new march towards
democracy and prog-
ress, he said.
Hajj Deputy Abdul
Lam Al Dughmri delivered
Peres vows
(Landed from page 1)
to peace, no to vio-
demonstration.
Standing beneath a huge
banner of her late husband
said, "Sealom Haver."
"Yomim Friend," she said.
"Here where he was happy,
here is where he met his
Liberation Mr. Rabin's
cousins who have come
sharp criticism for
persecutions on the night
of his death on Nov. 4, she
"Yitzhak always had
peace in his heart. He never
said anything could hap-
pen to him. There is nothing
to have to reproach
him for."
He was dressed in the
simple blue suit which
he wore to a ceremony ear-
lier in the day at Mr. Rabin's
burial in the Mount Herz
cemetery in Jeru-
I want to believe that this
example will not be in
vain. We have entered a new
PLO leaders
(Landed from page 1)
the members attending
a meeting listed by
Palestinian faction the
represent are:
Yasser Arafat
Kaddoum
Palestine Libera-
Ali Ishak
Palestine Popul-
the Front — Sam-
Palestinian People
Suleiman Najab.
Ahmad Nashashibi
Elias Khouri, Abd-
Jawad, Jamal Al Sou-
Zein and Yasser /
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The three members w-
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Malouh (the Popu-
line) and Shafiq
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Letter from Bandar Abbas

By Bill Hayton

ONLY THE breeze blowing off the Straits of Hormuz makes the summer heat of Bandar Abbas bearable. It is an inglorious town, with large areas of poor housing and not much to recommend it apart from its position on the Gulf, its huge port complex up the road and an airport. It is one big market and you only have to step off the main road into the back streets to find patches of derelict land with people buying and selling Western cigarettes. The revolutionary Guards pass by, but they make no attempt to stop it.

The trade brought traders to Bandar and the city's jetty bustles with life. Perhaps "jetty" is a bit unfair: it almost qualifies as a pier, with its shops selling sticky soft drinks and sea-shell sculptures of the kind you find in resorts on the English south coast. The pier also provides further evidence for one universal truth: that the behaviour of small boys is the same everywhere. Making lots of noise and getting in everyone's way while fishing for crabs off the end of the jetty, they risk hooking one of the dozens of speedboats which bob in organised anarchy at the foot of a ramp.

Up the ramp stretches a queue of people. This is the local taxi to ferry people to the islands off the straits

which, although they are quite near, can barely be seen through the heat haze. Once full, the boats hammer off at high speed into the nothingness. The ticket collector, invariably a small boy, rides rodcostyle at the front holding on to a rope as the taxi bounds and crashes across the waves. There doesn't seem too much concern for passenger safety amongst members of the Hormuz taxi association and one has to wonder how many fare-payers fail to arrive at their destination.

Incredibly, within the tunnels of the bazaar it is hotter still. Inside the arched walkways, each shopkeeper has installed an air-conditioning unit which, while blasting ice-cold air into the shops also pumps out heat into the alleyways. From time to time you have to stand inside a shop selling Japanese-made oven-to-table ware and make conversation with the owner just to save your shirt.

Although one doesn't see the relaxation of women's dress codes that is taking place in Tehran, the different way the women dress here makes the atmosphere in the bazaar seem lighter than in the capital. Many of the women, those with roots on the other side of the Gulf, cover themselves Sari-style rather than in chadors. Their choice of floral prints, albeit in shades of black and white, make one suspect that Laura Ashley has opened a

shop in town to market a monochrome summer collection.

Bazaaris are never happy, but in Bandar Abbas today they are grumpier than usual. Most depend on the smuggling trade across the narrow mouth of the Gulf: their shops are normally stocked full of electrical and electronic equipment brought from Dubai and Iran's own free trade areas on Kish and Qeshm islands. At the moment, however, their shelves are looking distinctly threadbare. One shop window boasts a few household chemicals and, strangely, 10 bottles of Vimto which look as if they've been there since Mossadegh was toppled. Perhaps they will never be sold. Iranian kids seem to prefer Coca Cola.

The bazaar blames the government, which has tightened up its anti-smuggling operations along the borders. Out in the Gulf, the Iranian coastguard is intercepting many more smugglers' speedboats than it used to. As a result, the smugglers are demanding higher prices from the bazaar who, in turn, are charging more to their customers. The customers, however, know that the increased surveillance will have to stop some time soon, and they're waiting for the prices to fall before they buy.

The cause of the anti-smuggling drive is the U.S. trade embargo. Rafsan-

jani's government fears getting short of hard currency, so it wants to reassert control over imports and prevent Bandar's traders spending their dollars over the water. However, they are going to have to steer a fine line if they are to avoid the resentment of bazaaris who can't sell and consumers who can't, or won't buy.

The revolution has not reduced the Iranian population's desire for material possessions only, arguably, its ability to obtain them. The Tahrani I am with are here to buy Japanese electronics or its cheap imitations: Sony or, failing that, Soni, and they are sorely disappointed not to find them. This cuts two ways.

For some it means that their government should mend its fences with the U.S. giving succour to Rafsanjani in his struggle with his opponents, whilst for others it's just another reason to despise the government. Whilst not being able to buy cheap radios is unlikely to turn them into revolutionaries instantly, it may be a factor in a general mood swing which would cause the political apparatus to crack down on signs of dissent. If that happens, the Revolutionary Guards won't be turning a blind eye to the cigarette selling, and then the people of Bandar may get seriously upset.

The Middle East International

For diehard Quebec separatists, hope arises even in defeat

By David Crary
The Associated Press

MONTREAL — Jokesters call it the "neverendum" — Quebec separatists lose one secession referendum, and swiftly call for another.

But for French-speaking separatists like Celine Gascon, it's no joke. At age 63, she yearns for independence from Canada before she dies.

"I'm quite positive it will happen," she said. "I just hope it will be in my lifetime."

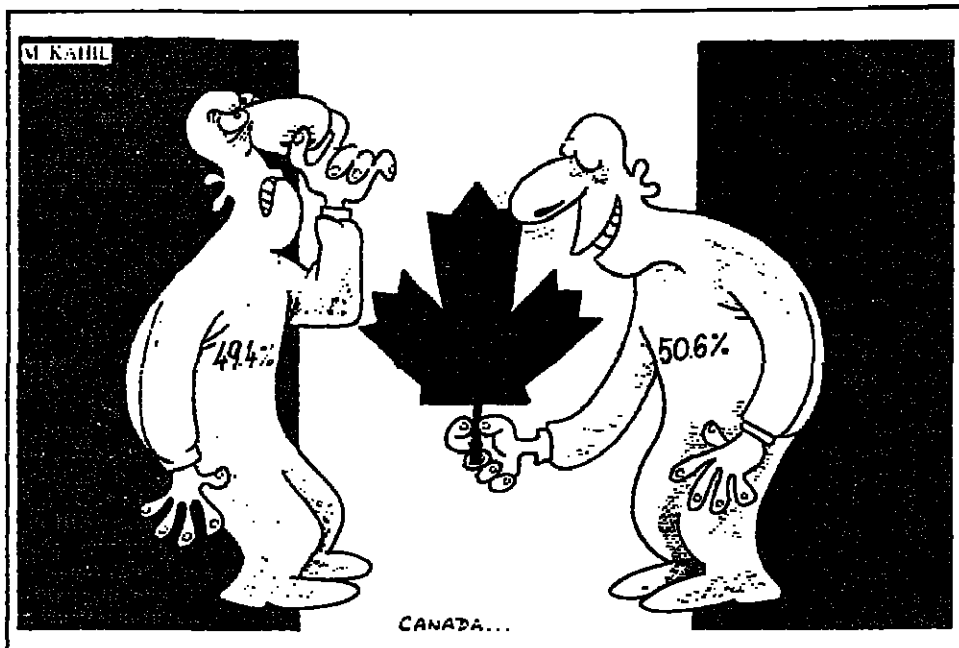
She poured her energy into the recent referendum campaign, which the separatists narrowly lost last week, by 53,000 votes out of 4.8 million cast. Though disappointed, Ms. Gascon is ready to try again — "in a couple of years."

Her passion, shared by hundreds of thousands of other French nationalists across Quebec, is incomprehensible to most Canadians in other provinces. They tend to view the separatists as whiners, exaggerating grievances while maneuvering for special political privileges.

To the separatists, privileges and grievances are no longer relevant. They don't want to be recognised as a "distinct society" within Canada. Nor do they seek to bargain any more for control over language policy X or social expenditure Y. They want a country of their own, to be run by themselves.

"We'll make mistakes, but they will be our mistakes," said Ms. Gascon, a painter who lives in Montreal with her husband, Fernand, a retired engineer.

The nationalist crusade can be measured in decades, or even in centuries, as reflected in the Quebec license-plate slogan: "Je me souviens" — I remember. French Quebecers bitterly evoke their ancestors' defeat by the British in 1759 in a war of little modern relevance to English-speaking Canada. They bristle over rebuffs and repression that occurred before their parents were born.



Lucien Bouchard, charismatic leader of the separatist referendum campaign, urged voters to "think of your ancestors and your children" when casting their ballots.

Fernand Gascon, 65, remembers catching the nationalist fervor as a youth in the 1940s and says his enthusiasm for a sovereign Quebec has grown steadily ever since.

"I worked very hard for the first referendum," he said, referring to the 1980 vote that the separatists lost 60 per cent to 40 per cent. "I cried for two days afterwards. This time I didn't cry. ... I think it will happen for us, perhaps within 10 years."

French nationalists resent the suggestion that they should be content as one of 10 co-equal Canadian provinces. In their minds, they are one of two "founding peoples" who formed the Canadian federation in 1867, uniting Quebec's French Catholics with their mostly British protestant neighbours.

This quest for recognition as a sovereign, equal partner to Canada doesn't make sense to Canadians elsewhere.

"It is a hopeless quest, because the other 'founding people' simply dis-

appeared," columnist Gwynne Dyer wrote in the Montreal Gazette. "Thanks to several generations of mass immigration... 'English Canada' today is neither British, nor Protestant, nor overwhelmingly white nor even dimly aware of the ancient conflicts and humiliations that still obsess French-Canadian ethnic nationalists."

Many French Quebecers do not travel much in the rest of Canada — they prefer winter holidays in Florida. Their news media only sporadically attempt to delve into the thinking of Canadians outside Quebec.

And communications can be difficult even within the province.

Ms. Gascon said she stopped trying to discuss separatist politics with English-speaking neighbours in Quebec because "we don't speak the same language." She speaks perfect English — she was talking about a deeper gap.

More than half of the 5.5 million French Quebecers do not think of themselves as Canadians, polls indicate. Many home fans at Montreal Canadiens hockey games routinely boo when the national anthem, "O Canada," is played before the opening face-off.

"We're a small minority

in a sea of Anglophones in North America. We're in great danger of being assimilated," said Ms. Gascon. "We're Francophone Quebecers in our hearts and in our guts. I want to preserve our language and culture. I want my grandchildren to be able to live in French, and be citizens of the country we built."

That was the chant echoed over and over at separatist rallies during the referendum campaign, and at the tearful gatherings on election night when defeat became undeniable: "On veut un pays" — we want a country.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien, a Quebecer himself, led the referendum fight against the separatists and now promises a range of political changes to make staying in Canada more palatable.

Mr. Bouchard — and the Gascons all over Quebec who support him — are not interested.

"We will not be begging for anything more," Mr. Bouchard said. "Those people have nothing to offer us. ... The next step will be a referendum, a sovereignty mandate, and then there we'll be at the table, discussing one on one, equal to equal."

King attends Mafrag rally, voices pride in Jordanians

(Continued from page 1)

"All through the past years I have exerted efforts to make available for the Jordanian youth, for young men and women, the opportunity to attain higher education, of which I was deprived, so that they can confront the future and the life's challenges armed with knowledge and good education," King Hussein said.

"Together we have stood firm in defence of the land and in construction in the face of all odds. We have now reached the stage where we are preparing to move forward in a new march towards reconstruction and progress," he said.

Mafrag Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dughmi delivered

an address at the rally voicing his community's best wishes to the King on his birthday and pledging their continued allegiance to and support for the Hashemite throne.

Mr. Dughmi presented the King with a golden sword as a gift from the Al Hassan tribes in the governorate.

The King was accorded a tumultuous welcome from the local citizens, singing national songs and performing traditional dances at the rally site, which was decorated with posters, flags and the King's portraits.

In Amman, Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on Sunday received Queen Sofia of Spain and Spanish Crown Prince Philip upon their arrival at Amman airport.

Queen Sofia and Prince Philip arrived here to congratulate King Hussein on his birthday on behalf of King Juan Carlos and the Spanish people.

Queen Sofia and Prince Philip were accompanied by Princess Irene.

Also receiving them at the airport were Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the King's military secretary, and Princess Ghida Talal and the Spanish ambassador to Jordan.

Also on Sunday two senior Omani envoys, Sheikh Shabib Ben Taymour and Sheikh Mustahil Ben Ahmad Al Maashani, arrived in Amman to congratulate the King on behalf of Sultan Qaboos of

Oman. They were received upon arrival by Prince Nayef Ben Ali, the private chamberlain, and the Omani ambassador to Jordan.

Sharif Zeid on Sunday attended the final rehearsals of a signing opera to be staged on Nov. 27 as part of the Ministry of Education's celebrations of King Hussein's birthday.

The rehearsals were staged at Al Nuzha vocational school. Also attending the rehearsals were Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Abdul Raouf Al Rawabeh, Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khalid Karaki, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Mirai and senior government officials.

Peres vows to continue Rabin's path for peace

(Continued from page 1)

"yes to peace, no to violence" demonstration.

Standing beneath a huge portrait of her late husband and a banner bearing the words "Shalom Haver," "Goodbye Friend," she said: "This is where he met his death, this is where he met his death."

Addressing Mr. Rabin's bodyguards who have come in for sharp criticism for security failures on the night of his death on Nov. 4, she said: "Yitzhak always had confidence in you. He never believed anything could happen to him. There is nothing you have to reproach yourselves for."

She was dressed in the same simple blue suit which she wore to a ceremony earlier in the day at Mr. Rabin's graveside in the Mount Herzl military cemetery in Jerusalem.

"I want to believe that this catastrophe will not be in vain. We have entered a new

world, into the better world you were hoping for, for you are the hope for peace."

"I told Shimon Peres: together you took the path of peace. You remained alone, we will all help you. I am calling on you, and I ask you to continue the path of peace."

A lone trumpeter opened the ceremony with a plaintive rendition of an old Israeli song about a warrior who went to war and did not return.

"Peres you are not walking alone," said stickers, plastered to the coats of the crowd, many of whom were carrying candles, and roses. "Enough to violence," said another.

Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo addressed the crowd, which felt still as he called a minute's silence for Mr. Rabin's memory.

He officially renamed the place Yitzhak Rabin Square, and hoped "for a better country where tolerance will reign and there will be no more

violence."

Young members of youth organisations addressed the crowd one by one calling for tolerance.

In a message President Ezer Weizman called for Israelis to learn "from the lesson of this death that is 'No to violence and yes to peace'."

Mr. Peres unexpectedly attended the Tel Aviv memorial rally despite reports security chiefs had urged him to stay away.

Live television showed Mr. Peres greeting Leah Rabin at an enclosure for dignitaries at the square. Mayor Milo, who opened the ceremony, welcomed Mr. Peres.

At the Labour Party meeting, one of about a dozen people speakers at a stage covered in red carnations at a Tel Aviv cultural centre, Mr. Rabin's former aide Shimon Sheves criticised the killer and the headline opposition headed by Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

"There was among us in

our country one who made the blood of Yitzhak cheap, and there was one who didn't stop those who cheapened his blood, and there were all those who were supportive but remained silent," Mr. Sheves said.

After the killing, Leah Rabin told reporters that Mr. Netanyahu — who spoke at right-wing rallies where hundreds called Mr. Rabin a traitor — shared the blame for the violent climate in which the assassination took place.

"I am still looking back and I still haven't forgotten the awful words of incitement said about him and against him, the cries of 'traitor' and 'murderer' that were hurled at him. And even if he didn't show and express how much they hurt him, I know how much they hurt him," Mr. Sheves said.

All stood in silence when Leah Rabin entered the hall. Cabinet members and journalists alike wiped away tears.

'Shin Bet' was tipped off of assassination plan

(Continued from page 1)

gor, from the history department at Tel Aviv University.

Despite the warnings, "nothing was done, no agents were sent to infiltrate it (the university), there was no sealing off of the areas where the prime minister went, no shots were fired at the murderer."

And he added Amir could only have got the murder weapon, a pistol, with a gun permit approved by the Shin Bet.

The Shin Bet official in charge of Rabin's protection has already resigned and three others have been suspended.

But Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his cabinet on Sunday expressed "total confidence" in the service, the prime minister's office said.

Asked about the accusations that the Shin Bet was warned in advance, Cabinet Secretary Shmuel Hollander told reporters: "The reports that appeared in the media were very far from the truth. Meanwhile, police uncovered a weapons store at the home of soldier Arik Schwartz, 21, who lives in the Bnei Brak ultra-orthodox suburb of Tel Aviv. His father Naphtali Schwartz, a dentist, is also being held.

The soldier is suspected of supplying grenades and explosives and a silencer to Yigal Amir, and his brother Hagai.

The Amir brothers and other members of a shadowy group had tried eight times to kill Mr. Rabin with the blessing of extremist rabbis, investigators said. One past plan had been to shoot Mr. Rabin at his home with a long-range rifle.

Police minister Moshe Shahal said they belonged to a Jewish extremist cell which had also planned to launch a spectacular attack on Arabs. But the Shin Bet has voiced doubts on the conspiracy theory.

Meanwhile, five Israelis accused of threatening to kill Mr. Peres were also arrested Sunday by police at Rishon Le Zion, state radio said.

The five were traced after they made threatening phone calls to the police station from the factory where they worked.

Police have identified the rabbis who gave the go-ahead for the murder of Mr. Rabin in a religious decree. Haaretz newspaper reported.

It said at least two rabbis gave their blessing to Dror Hadani, one of the detained suspects.

Hadani, who studied at a Jewish settlement near Hebron on the occupied West Bank, is suspected of having served as an intermediary between the rabbis and assassin Amir, Haaretz said.

It said the rabbis, who were not named, would soon be arrested although they were believed to be unaware that a real attack was about to take place.

Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun from another West Bank settlement threatened on Thursday to divulge the names of the rabbis in question unless they resigned. He was to meet chief rabbis on Monday to hand over a list.

Israel's chief rabbi, Israel Lau, said he would order a rabbinical inquiry and give the names to the authorities. Israeli security services are also investigating the funding

of extremist groups by American Jews, who have already collected \$100,000 for the assassin of Mr. Rabin, papers reported.

The income of extremist right-wing cells and funds transferred from the United States will be checked up, the daily Davar Rishon said.

It added that Israel may call on the U.S. security services to help the inquiry. "These funds must not be allowed into Israel," said Mr. Sarid.

Orthodox Jews in New York have set up a collection for Yigal Amir. Army radio and Davar Rishon said \$100,000 had already been collected.

Organisers described Amir as a "great Jewish hero" and Mr. Rabin as "an extreme radical racist."

Attorney General Janet Reno said last week that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was prepared to help the Israeli inquiry.

PLO leadership reviews course of peace after Rabin

(Continued from page 1)

The members attending the Cairo meeting (listed by the Palestinian faction that they represent) are:

Fateh — Yasser Arafat, Farouk Kaddumi, Mahmoud Abbas.

The Palestine Liberation Front — Ali Ishak.

The Palestine Popular Struggle Front — Samir Ghoshe.

The Palestinian People's Party — Suleiman Najab.

Independents — Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi, Bishop Elias Khouri, Abdul-Houari, Jamal Al-Souti, Yasser Amr, Jawid Al-Ghoussein and Yasser Abed Rabbo (originally represented the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine — DFLP).

The three members who have resigned are Taysir Khaled (DFLP), Abdul-Rahim Mallooh (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and Shafiq Al-Hout (Independent).

Mr. Mahmoud Ismail of the Arab Liberation Front has not formally resigned but he has not been attending meetings.

Salim Zaanoun, who is not a committee member, was also attending, apparently in his capacity as acting speaker of the Palestine National Council.

The meeting was the first since a Jewish militant shot dead Mr. Rabin at a Tel Aviv rally on Nov. 4.

The session focussed on hammering out an electoral law for the first Palestinian self-rule elections, set for Jan. 20, making room for the Hamas fundamentalist group to participate. Mr. Nashashibi said.

"The law won't be finally adopted during this meeting because it needs much deeper study and should be looked at by all the political blocks," he said.

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas "has already sent its comments, which concern only the procedures and modalities of the elections," he added, without providing details on the comments.

Mr. Nashashibi said Hamas would "most probably" take part in the elections by forming a political party, adding that "already

the names of several members of this party's directing office have been announced."

The law under examination gives the right to "any literate Palestinian over 18 years old to run as a candidate" for the autonomy council, Mr. Nashashibi said.

Before the session started Mr. Arafat said he would not be meeting with Hamas officials during this session "but there are contacts to hold a meeting in Cairo in the coming days" to reconcile between PLO and Hamas.

Mr. Arafat presided over the session which began in the morning on Sunday to continue until late into the evening.

The PLO committee also plans "to act on the Arab, Islamic and international level to oppose" the U.S. Congress decision passed last month to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem by 1999, Mr. Nashashibi said.

The PLO has backed the holding of an emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers at the Arab League, "but this requires

more consultation," Mr. Nashashibi said.

The permanent representatives to the Arab League will meet Tuesday with league head Esmat Abdul Meguid to work out a response to the U.S. decision, the pan-Arab organisation said on Sunday.

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Oman reforms to help budget, attract capital

MUSCAT (AFP) — Economic reforms launched by Oman four years ago to offset weak oil prices will help tackle its budget deficit and attract investment, the Omani chamber of commerce and industry said Sunday.

The reforms included privatisation of five public institutions and there are plans to sell more government facilities and set up major projects in partnership with the private sector, the chamber said in a study on Oman's reforms, the largest economic restructuring programme in the Gulf.

"Privatisation programmes in the sultanate will produce a lot of gains," said the study, carried by the official Omani news agency.

"They include upgrading productivity and achieving extra revenue that will improve the balance of payments and cut the budget deficit, boost financial reserves and meet growing development needs instead of withdrawing from the overseas reserves or restoring to the more costly borrowing," the study added.

Oman, an independent oil producer, launched reforms after its economy was hurt by low crude prices due to its heavy dependence on oil exports.

The reforms include privatisations, freeing interest rates, improvement of investment laws and opening the stock market to foreigners.

Apart from a key cement plant and four other public enterprises, the government plans to sell more facilities while it has already announced the establishment of major projects to be managed by the private sector.

They include a petrochemical complex at a cost of around \$800 million, new electricity networks and expansion of existing plants, and two sewage ventures in Muscat and Minah at a cost of nearly \$715 million.

"Such a policy will help expand the investors' base, activate dealing in the stock exchange, and boost national savings," the chamber said.

"It will also attract overseas Omani funds, enable the private sector to manage major projects and create new job opportunities for the citizens."

Oman produces more than 800,000 barrels per day of crude, fetching nearly \$4 billion a year. But revenues are set to surge when an \$8 billion gas liquefaction plant start producing six million tonnes by the year 2000.

The decline in oil prices has slowed Oman's economy, turned a surplus in the balance of payment into a deficit and created a persistent budget shortfall, which was projected at around \$811 million in 1995.

EU, U.S. businessmen appeal to governments to lift trade barriers

SEVILLE, Spain (AFP) — More than 100 business leaders from the European Union (EU) and the United States Saturday appealed to their governments to step up efforts to remove barriers to transatlantic trade.

"The obstacles to business, caused by both excessive regulation and differences between EU and U.S. regulatory systems must be dismantled," said a communiqué issued after a gathering here entitled "Transatlantic Business Dialogue."

U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown said the outcome of the two-day meeting had surpassed predictions from "the most optimistic among us, and I count myself among that number."

Mr. Brown had helped organise the encounter, along with Sir Leon Brittan and Martin Bangemann, members of the EU's executive commission.

"We asked for a business-driven agenda and now we have it," Mr. Brown declared. Recommendations adopted here will serve as a basis for an EU-U.S. summit in Madrid Dec. 3 attended by U.S. President Bill Clinton, European Commission Chairman Jacques Santer and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency.

Participants here called for the speedy unification of technical specifications and certification requirements as a means of stimulating commercial exchanges.

"There should be increased transparency and cooperation," they said, adding that the European Union and the United States "should take all possible measures to liberalise trade as much as possible."

The businessmen pressed for an end to local and regional restrictions on investment, urged governments to refrain from unilateral sanctions and agreed on the importance of a global market.

Sir Brittan said delegates wanted world-wide trade to be "substantially" liberalised.

"The exact form of this still needs to be decided but the message from business is clear," he added.

Among those taking part in the conference were senior executives from Ericsson, Alcatel Alsthom, Ford, Xerox, Bethlehem Steel, Siemens and Pechiney.

An executive committee from the Seville conference will meet in January to review the degree to which the recommendations have been taken into consideration by governments.

Iraq takes measures to end gas shortage

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq has taken steps to tackle an acute shortage of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and to reduce soaring prices, Baghdad newspapers reported Sunday.

They said the price of gas cylinders for domestic use was now beyond the reach of low-income and most salaried people.

The government price for a gas cylinder is 60 dinars (about two U.S. cents), but by the time it reaches consumers the price goes up to 750 dinars (about 30 cents), a sizeable chunk of a civil servant's salary.

The papers blamed low production and high transport costs for the LPG shortages and high prices.

Oil Minister Amir Mohammad Rasheed pledged in a newspaper interview Sunday that he was determined to end the shortage and help reduce prices.

Winter has just arrived in Baghdad, and long queues form outside gas cylinder distribution centres.

Mr. Rasheed said it cost more to transport gas than to produce it. He said it cost the government 60 dinars to fill a cylinder but 75 dinars to transport it to distribution centres.

He said his ministry had increased the number of gas filling factories to 46 from 14, and these were producing half a million cylinders per day.

Iraqis use gas mainly for cooking. Residents said there was high demand for gas cylinders in the three northern provinces now under Kurdish rebel control — one of the factors behind the soaring prices.

Iraq also supplies Jordan with its gas and crude oil requirements. A fleet of tankers ferries about 70,000 barrels of oil a day to Jordan.

Mr. Rasheed said his ministry suffered from a shortage in vehicles to transport gas inside the country. Lack of spare parts had made idle 79 vehicles out of a fleet of 169.

Mr. Rasheed said his ministry suffered from a shortage in vehicles to transport gas inside the country. Lack of spare parts had made idle 79 vehicles out of a fleet of 169.

'One-fifth of tourists to Cyprus are from the Middle East & Gulf'

THE CYPRUS Tourism Organisation (CTO), in cooperation with Cyprus Airways and Sun Hotels Group held a one-week Cyprus folklore & food festival at Nile Hilton, which coincided with the 11th General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation recently held in Cairo and attended by 1000 delegates from 121 countries and 380 journalists, many of whom enjoyed these traditional & lively Cyprus nights.

Mrs. Phryne Michael, the CTO director-general, said in a press statement that Cyprus targets at increasing the quality of tourists from the neighbouring Arab states, who often come repeatedly with their families and love our modern touristic resorts, the safe & clean environment, the moderate climate round-the-year, the flowery swimming pools & beaches full of European tourists, as well as our landscapes, pine-clad mountains with snow for skiing in winter.

Mrs. Michael said that over two million tourists have visited the island in 1994, and the figures for the first semester of 1995 showed an increase of 8.4 per cent. Of these visitors, 20 per cent come from the Middle East and the Gulf and find no difficulty in communication since English, Arabic & French are widely spoken by our friendly, hospitable people. The total annual number of tourists represents more than 3 times the population of Cyprus, however, they are comfortably accommodated in our 80,000 beds that exist in 185 hotels, 190 hotel apartments and other licensed flats & villas.

"It is worthy of note that almost one-third of the total tourists come to us in winter, when they can ski on the mountains or take a swim in the sunshine," she said.

Picture from left: Cypriot Minister of Commerce, Industry & Tourism Kyriakos Christofi; Secretary-General of the Greek National Tourist Organisation Apostolos Kossonas; CTO Publicity Agent for the Middle East & Gulf Edward Daniel; CTO Director-General Phryne Michael; CTO Director for the Arab States Cleopatra Nafis, and CTO Chairman of the Board of Directors Andreas Nicolaou.

OECD forecasters confirm downward growth revision

PARIS (AFP) — OECD forecasters confirmed here Tuesday a downward revision of growth projections for the 25 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for this year and 1996.

Participants in the semi-annual meeting of the OECD's Economic Policy Committee (EPC) said the OECD secretariat presented a new set of preliminary figures that might still have to be adjusted before publication of the OECD's year-end forecasts next month.

The revision took into account a near-stagnation in the Japanese economy, this year's sharp recession in Mexico following its financial crisis, and a weaker-than-expected performance in Europe.

The officials said the revised overall figures were in line with those indicated at the end of September by OECD Secretary-General Jean-Claude Paye, who forecasted OECD growth of about 2.25 per cent this year and around 2.5 per cent in 1996.

The figure for 1995 was about 0.5 below last June's OECD forecast, while growth next year in the 25 industrial nations could be about one quarter-point less than initially expected.

However, participants did not appear overly worried by the slower pace of growth. Some of them noted that growth rates now appear more "synchronised" than last year.

More over, they said, inflation appeared to be under control throughout the OECD area and employment had been picking up, although jobless figures remain too high in many European countries.

The panel, a forum for discussion and exchange of information among policy-making officials of the OECD countries, which meets twice annually to examine economic trends and prospects and discuss their implications for government policies, focused on structural policy issues at its opening session, including action that could help reduce unemployment.

The dollar depreciated more on Monday, while stocks declined as traders bet on a budget deficit. Analysts said to reach an agreement on a financial obligation payment. They said that the two parties to the U.S. unit appreciate the dollar's decline, while the French president's new cabinet, programs to bring about a new government.

The dollar continued its decline, while the Mexican peso rose against the U.S. dollar. The dollar's rise against the Mexican peso was expected to be a boon for the Mexican economy, which has been struggling since the peso's devaluation in December 1995.

The U.S. unit continued its decline, while the Mexican peso rose against the U.S. dollar. The dollar's rise against the Mexican peso was expected to be a boon for the Mexican economy, which has been struggling since the peso's devaluation in December 1995.



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THE Daily Crossword by Dorothy E. Martin

ACROSS

- Need
- Greek peak
- Fiat-bottomed boat
- even keel
- Valuable violin
- Peel
- Not discouraged
- Assert strongly
- Relate
- Cotton cloth
- English river
- Skim along
- Conger
- Slinging insect
- Author Wister
- House pet
- Podestals part
- Stroll
- Grand Canyon state
- Expand again
- Defied
- Penny
- Nunnammer
- Klin
- Victory sign
- Position of a golf ball
- Mimic
- Priestly vestment
- Spectacles
- One with confidential information
- Rogers et al.
- False outward show
- fixe
- Publish
- Gymnast Korbut
- Kind of skirt
- Nerve network
- Necessity

DOWN

- Jeweler's glass
- Subsidiary building
- Framework
- Make a sweater
- Certain Arab
- Utter
- Phase
- Assistant
- Astronauts' milieu
- Procession
- Pitcher
- Hersher
- "The Way We"
- "A miss is as good as —"
- Secure
- Pick up an option
- Rocky crag
- Fool
- News
- Linguistic unit
- Arabian gulf
- Canvas shelter
- Fathers
- Diva's solo
- Showed
- Remits
- Pleasant
- Woodwinds
- Teachers' org.
- Allan—
- Place of a crime
- Gaelic
- Japanese immigrant to the U.S.
- Provoked
- Shelf
- Livelihood
- Forbidden town
- Arabian potentate
- Letter encl.
- Press
- Concorde

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

BAIT	BOAR	ASSET
ANTE	ERGO	STENO
ROAN	ALAS	SANDY
BALTI	MORE	COLTS
DEN	ARK	
MASHED	FEST	ANT
ALIAS	HALT	SPUR
LIGHT	THORSE	HARRY
ANNA	ONCE	AMISS
RES	ATIE	OMELET
ADE	ARM	
THE	OLD	GRAYMARE
GRASP	EAST	AGED
PETIT	FLOE	CRAIG
SEERS	TEND	HERE

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

Peanuts

Andy Cap

Mutt'n'Jeff

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Harri Arnold and Mike Argleton

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GULAH
DUHMI
TULASE
ENSHOC

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: MADE

Yesterday's Jumbles: JUDGE SPURN COOGER GUITAR
Answer: How he spent his leisure time — HE "DUG" GARDENS

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your mind is working cleverly today and you know what should be done to become more successful in your undertakings.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Try to gain whatever data you need confidentially today and then later tonight use it wisely to gain your finest aims for your success.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Plan early today how to gain your greatest ambitions and then go after them in a positive way. A compliment works wonders.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Do as much public activities this morning as you can and gain added prestige, success and profit later this evening as well.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a good day today to take those chances you have in mind, but don't just start and then get cold feet for good results.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be more concerned with the big issues today instead of concentrating on the details so much of any enterprise you are involved.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can today view your partners from a different and better angle at this time and come to a fine understanding with them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be enthusiastic about accomplishing a good deal today and you can do just that and efficiently, also. Channel energies constructively.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Put dull duties aside and go after what is important in the business world and gain your aims. Also, have a good time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you use the right words at this time, you can easily get your family to do what you wish. Study your home for needed repairs.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a good day today to see as many persons as you can, whether for business or personal purposes and get good results.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Think over what you can do to have more success later this evening so that you need not worry about finances or monetary obligations.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

Business

tax reform

Foreign Exchange

November 6 - N

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES FOR NOVEMBER 13, 1995

Country	Unit	Rate
USA	Dollar	1.0000
UK	Pound	0.6700
France	Franc	6.5596
Germany	Mark	1.3663
Italy	Lira	2036.27
Spain	Peseta	166.64
Japan	Yen	163.89
Canada	Dollar	0.7100
Australia	Dollar	0.6800
South Africa	Rand	4.7600
India	Rupee	47.5000
China	Yuan	8.2750
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.7800
Taiwan	Dollar	0.2200
Thailand	Baht	0.0350
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.0047
Singapore	Dollar	0.7800
Philippines	Peso	0.0480
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0002
Brunei	Dollar	0.7800
Myanmar	Kyats	0.0001
Burma	Kyats	0.0001
Cambodia	Riels	0.0000
Laos	Kips	0.0000
Vietnam	Dong	0.0000
North Vietnam	Dong	0.0000
South Vietnam	Dong	0.0000
East Germany	Mark	1.3663
West Germany	Mark	1.3663
Poland	Zloty	0.0000
Czech Republic	Koruna	0.0000
Slovak Republic	Koruna	0.0000
Hungary	Forint	0.0000
Romania	Leu	0.0000
Bulgaria	Lev	0.0000
Greece	Drachma	0.0000
Turkey	Lira	0.0000
Israel	Sheqel	0.0000
Jordan	Dinar	0.0000
Yemen	Rial	0.0000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.0000
UAE	Dirham	0.0000
Oman	Rial	0.0000
Qatar	Riyal	0.0000
Bahrain	Dinar	0.0000
Kuwait	Dinar	0.0000
Sri Lanka	Rupee	0.0000
Maldives	Rufiyaa	0.0000
Comoros	Franc	0.0000
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Zimbabwe	Dollar	0.0000
Botswana	Pula	0.0000
Namibia	Dollar	0.0000
Angola	Kwanza	0.0000
Cape Verde	Escudo	0.0000
Guinea-Bissau	Bulim	0.0000
Sierra Leone	Leone	0.0000
Liberia	Dollar	0.0000
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Ghana	Cedi	0.0000
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Cote d'Ivoire	CFA Franc	0.0000
Upper Volta	CFA Franc	0.0000
Benin	CFA Franc	0.0000
Nigeria	Naira	0.0000
Equatorial Guinea	Franc	0.0

Tax reform concerns threaten investment in China

SHANGHAI (AFP) — The fear of massive tax reforms in China has put foreign investors and local officials on edge against projects being announced as too costly.

"Today it's on the level of rumours, but in China when rumours are going on, it's very dangerous because it means something is going on," said Gil-est, a global market analyst at the director for GEC Al-al, a global market analyst at the director for GEC Al-al.

"It's indeed a very hot topic," Mr. Van Kerkhove said.

Rebates on export value-added taxes (VAT) were cut to 14 per cent from 17 per cent earlier this year and will be cut again to around nine per cent from Jan. 1, 1996.

The central government is also targeting a tax exemp-

tion on imported capital used as part of a foreign investor's equity investment — a major concern for both foreign and local firms involved in large capital investments.

Qiu Xianyan, deputy director of a joint venture treatment and conservation project between the Shanghai government and the World Bank, said costs on several projects worth more than \$500 million could rise sharply.

"The advantage of the World Bank loans was that we could purchase the cheapest equipment from anywhere in the world," Mr. Qiu said. "If the central government raises the tax, the total investment of our projects will increase 20 to 30 per cent."

Survey shows Jordanians against raising bread prices

A SURVEY on a sample covering 5,000 Jordanian families from various governorates and with varying incomes, has shown that 65.5 per cent of the group think that current bread prices are suitable and that they disapprove of any increase in prices. According to the study conducted by the Consumer Protection Society, 79.1 per cent of the sample buy more than five kilograms of bread everyday and 7.7 per cent buy less than four kilograms. It was also found that 79.1 per cent of the families with eight members buy more than five kilograms of bread daily. Most families, 79.1 per cent, comprising seven members or more were found not to waste bread. Neither was there any waste in families who had less than five members (7.7 per cent). Waste was mainly existent in 5.9 per cent of the sample with a 5-member family and in 7.3 per cent of the group having six members. The waste was two loaves (150 grammes each) each day for the first category and one loaf for the second. The society said religious belief that bread is a grace from God and should not be thrown away, could be attributed to the low wastage of bread which is also considered as a basic food product for most of the world's families. Those families (34.5 per cent) who said that the price of the Arabic bread was not suitable claimed that the quality of the loaf does not match the price (\$5 fils per kilogramme) it costs. Others said they cannot afford to pay the current prices either because of the large size of the family or because of high living costs in general. To improve the quality of bread, 75.5 per cent of the sample suggested buying better quality of wheat, \$5.1 per cent proposed using modern furnaces and 32.9 per cent recommended employing skilled labourers. As to the subject of subsidy, 65.5 per cent favoured keeping the current price, 21.3 per cent preferred raising the price by 15 per kilogramme and 13.2 per cent backed raising the price by 25 fils per kilogramme. This result should be seen against the background that 41 per cent of the sample earn less than JD 300 per month and that 61.5 per cent of the families comprised seven or more members. Of those who preferred keeping bread prices unchanged (2,338 families), 91.9 per cent cited decreasing purchasing power as a reason, 80.4 per cent cited the large size of the family and 80.1 per cent saw bread as a basic food product and, as such, should be easily available to all people. Abdul Elah Al Hamawi, head of the general association for owners of bakeries, indicated that more than 50 per cent of subsidised bread and wheat is consumed by people outside the target group of beneficiaries. The country is estimated to consume 600,000 tonnes of wheat per year and the Ministry of Supply, the sole importer of wheat, says it pays about JD 85 million for this product annually. Last year, the ministry sold 657,000 tonnes of wheat to the market. But, with the international price for wheat reaching \$210 a tonne from \$177 a tonne few months ago, Jordan's bill for wheat is expected to be much higher this year unless bread prices are raised or subsidies rechannelled to reach only the needy families (Al Ra'i).

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (November 6 - November 10, 1995)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit depreciated sharply against the yen last week, while appreciating modestly against sterling and stabilising against the mark. It ended the week 2.96 per cent lower against the yen, 8.89 per cent higher against sterling.

The dollar depreciated marginally against the mark and the yen Monday, while stabilising against sterling. The U.S. unit declined as traders feared the consequences of the heated debate between Congress and the White House over the budget deficit. Analysts indicated that if the two parties failed to reach an agreement regarding increasing the debt ceiling before Nov. 15, the U.S. government will default on its financial obligations, including a \$25 billion interest payment. They, however, stressed that it is unlikely that the two parties will fail to reach an agreement by that time.

The U.S. unit appreciated marginally against the mark Tuesday, while drifting lower against the yen and sterling. Reports indicated that the dollar rose against the mark on news that the French prime minister cut nine of 42 cabinet posts in his new cabinet, and pledged to trim federal programmes to bring about a reduction in the budget deficit.

The dollar continued its depreciation against the yen Wednesday, while appreciating against the mark and sterling. The dollar's rise came on the back of the mark's decline against other European currencies on profit taking operations. Meanwhile, the dollar shrugged-off news that the Mexican peso tumbled, as the Mexican government was said to be considering imposing restrictions on capital transfers out of Mexico.

The U.S. unit continued its depreciation against the mark and yen Thursday, while appreciating against sterling. Reports indicated that traders took long position on the yen and the Mexican peso. The Mexican peso rose sharply after the Mexican central bank unexpectedly intervened heavily in the market to support its currency.

The dollar rose against other major currencies at the end of the week, however, as traders reversed the preceding day's activity and took their profits on the Mexican peso and the yen. Meanwhile, market participants focused on developments in the U.S. budget debate, where the U.S. Administration was expected to veto a GOP bill, passed in the lower house, which allows an increase in the U.S. debt ceiling until early December, but includes spending conditions that are unacceptable to the Clinton's Administration.

The U.S. unit, thus, ended the week at 1.4175 marks, 100.90 yen and at \$1.5660 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	Today Nov. 10, 1995	Nov. 9, 1995	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5800	1.5660	(0.89) %
Deutsche Mark	1.4167	1.4175	(0.06) %
Swiss Franc	1.1400	1.1396	0.04 %
French Franc	4.8952	4.8835	0.24 %
Japanese Yen	103.89	100.80	2.96 %

* USD Per STD

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	1-Month (%)	3-Month (%)	6-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.78	5.50	5.71	5.93
Sterling Pound	6.62	6.62	6.62	6.56
Deutsche Mark	1.93	3.89	3.88	3.81
Swiss Franc	1.87	1.81	1.55	1.81
French Franc	6.10	5.80	6.10	5.75
Japanese Yen	0.50	0.62	0.46	0.56

* USD Per STD

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	USD	Yen
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.1072	1.1127
Deutsche Mark	0.5012	0.5037
Swiss Franc	0.6226	0.6257
French Franc	0.1448	0.1455
Japanese Yen	0.7009	0.7044
British Pound	0.4470	0.4498
Swedish Krona	0.0443	0.0445

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	USD	Yen
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.1072	1.1127
Deutsche Mark	0.5012	0.5037
Swiss Franc	0.6226	0.6257
French Franc	0.1448	0.1455
Japanese Yen	0.7009	0.7044
British Pound	0.4470	0.4498
Swedish Krona	0.0443	0.0445

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	USD	Yen
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.1072	1.1127
Deutsche Mark	0.5012	0.5037
Swiss Franc	0.6226	0.6257
French Franc	0.1448	0.1455
Japanese Yen	0.7009	0.7044
British Pound	0.4470	0.4498
Swedish Krona	0.0443	0.0445

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Giro d'Italia to start in Greece without big names

ROME (R) — The 1996 Giro d'Italia cycling race will start in Athens to mark the 100th anniversary of the modern Olympic Games, organisers said on Saturday. But the 3,951-km event will be missing some big names.

Organisers presented the itinerary of the 74th Giro, which begins on May 15 and includes four stages in Greece and traditional cross-border excursions into France and Switzerland for a total of 22 stages.

Only one stretch will have an individual time-trial — the 64-km, 19th stage on June 6th from Vicenza to Marostica in northern Italy — and there will be only one rest day to transfer riders to Italy on May 21.

But if the organisers pointed happily to the venture into Greece, which revived an ancient tradition when it staged the first modern Olympic Games in April 1896, they said nothing about some big absences.

Five-time Tour de France winner Miguel Indurain of Spain and Tour of Spain champion Laurent Jalabert of France will not ride in Italy's most important cycling event, their Banesto and Ince teams have said.

Last year's winner, Swiss Toni Rominger, has yet to say if he will ride in the Giro, which ends in June 9th — just 20 days before the start of what looks set to be an especially

gruelling Tour de France.

And Italy's Marco Pantani, seriously injured recently when he was hit by a truck, may not be ready by the start. Claudio Chiappucci is uncertain about riding, leaving veteran Gianni Bugno as Italy's best bet.

But riders at the presentation said they liked the Giro's early stages in a relatively flat part of central Greece and its final, arduous stretch through the Alps.

"It is a very different Giro from past years," Eugeny Berzin, the Russian winner of the 1994 Giro, said. "The first part is very open and the last five days will be decisive," he told reporters.

The 14th through 17th stages will be in the western Alps, and the 20th and 21st stages in the Dolomites where a high point of 2,621 metres is reached at Coppi's Peak.

"The final stretch will be very, very intense," a bed-ridden Pantani told state television.

Hill wins season-ending Australian Grand Prix

ADELAIDE (AFP) — Damon Hill scored a morale-boosting victory in the season-ending Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Adelaide on Sunday where all his rivals fell by the wayside.

Hill, driving a Williams Renault, finished two laps ahead of the lesser-known Frenchman Olivier Panis, in a Ligier Mugen, and Italian Gianni Morbidelli, in a Footwork Hart.

The 81-lap race over 306 kilometres (190 miles) unfolded into a gruelling war of attrition with only eight of the 23 cars finishing.

Panis and Morbidelli were able to grab some rare limelight after the likes of double world champion Michael Schumacher, Hill's teammate David Coulthard and Ferrari's Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger all dropped out.

Hill's fourth win of the

year, and 13th overall from 51 starts, cemented his second place behind Schumacher in the final drivers' standings. Williams also dominated qualifying and the race before what was claimed by officials to be a world record Formula One crowd of 205,000.

Hill won the last Australian Grand Prix to be staged at Adelaide, before it moves to Melbourne from next March, in one hour 49 minutes 15.946 seconds.

"I was anticipating a long, hard race, but everything just fell apart... Gerhard dropped out, Michael dropped out, David dropped out, (Johnny) Herbert as well... it was ridiculous," Hill said.

"For a country famous for flies, they were dropping like flies here and I was going around thinking this is too easy, and that's when something jumps out and bites you."

Hill's year started optimistically but turned sour. His last win was in Hungary in July and he was forced to retire three times in the five races leading up to Adelaide.

"This is a great morale-booster for the team, we had hoped to have done this in the last three races, but at least we've managed to pull it off here and we showed that the Williams car is very competitive and probably the best car out there now," he said.

Hill started in pole position but teammate Coulthard hit the front until lap 22 when first Coulthard and then Schumacher came to grief.

Coulthard, who is switching to McLaren next season, held a comfortable lead, but his first pit stop on lap 20 proved calamitous.

The 24-year-old Scot zoomed in off the track, but was too quick into the bend and slammed into the pit wall, damaging his front left wheel.

"As I turned the corner with my foot on the brake the engine drove and pushed me forward, I locked up the front wheels and drove into the wall," said Coulthard.

Schumacher briefly took over, but after the German re-fuelled he had a wheel-banging collision with Alesi at the end of the main straight.

The Frenchman's Ferrari



World champion Michael Schumacher of Germany receives cheers from spectators during a drivers' parade at the Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Adelaide (AFP photo)

suffered front wing damage and in the flying debris, Schumacher's Benetton was forced to make a two stops in the pits before a rear suspension problem ended his hopes of a record 10th win in a season. He equalled Nigel Mansell's standard at Suzuka last month.

"In my view, he (Alesi) was just frustrated. I had passed him, but he tried to pass me back on the outside where there was no way," said Schumacher.

"As he realised this, he pulled back and put his front

wheel in the front of my rear wheel. I had nowhere to go but over his tyre and that was it. I damaged the tyre and my suspension. It was the end of my race."

Alesi said: "After the race I talked with Michael. We both said our piece calmly. Neither of us changed our

opinion, but there will not be a grudge between us."

Berger, bidding for a third victory here, took up the pursuit from the 31st lap, but he pulled out four laps later with smoke billowing from his Ferrari engine.

Schumacher's teammate, Johnny Herbert, briefly entertained hopes of a British one-two behind Hill, before he came to grief on lap 71 with flames showing from the back of his Benetton.

It was left to Panis to secure his best finish but not without drama as his Ligier's engine began smoking with four laps left. He went on with smoke pouring over the track, but was able to keep going long enough to secure the six points as runner-up.

Morbidelli, with just 4½ points from 59 previous GPs, also limped home into third spot.

"The problem was that there was a terrible smell in my cabin because it was leaking oil, and for the last stages of the race I was saying 'what is this smell? Come on, come one another lap'... that was my problem," said the popular Italian.

"Hakkinen soon out of intensive care"

The condition of Formula One driver Mika Hakkinen continued to improve here Sunday after a horrifying accident in the Australian Grand Prix qualifying round Friday.

Hakkinen was unconscious for 24 hours after suffering head injuries when his McLaren Mercedes, travelling at around 250 kmh (155mph), spun out of control and hurtled into a wall.

The medical bulletin from Royal Adelaide Hospital early Sunday said the 27-year-old Finn had significantly improved and he had slept comfortably.

The hospital said Hakkinen would remain in intensive care for another 24 hours, and would subsequently need further hospital treatment.

On Saturday a hospital statement said Hakkinen had sat up in bed and spoken with staff.

The racing world feared the worst on Friday when doctors needed 15 minutes to extricate him from the cockpit of his McLaren car. Press photographs showed him with blood around his mouth and nose.

McLaren team boss Ron Dennis has blamed a punctured left-hand rear tyre for Hakkinen's accident.

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- 4- Insulators and Fittings: Design, manufacture, testing and delivery of insulator strings and fittings for the phase conductors and stranded steel earthwires.
- 5- Erection: Receiving of all necessary material for the 400kv transmission lines, transport and erection of the complete lines including the towers, insulator strings, conductors, earthwires, OPGW and fittings.
- 6- Turnkey: Design, manufacture, testing, delivery, insurance and erection of all needed 400kv transmission lines materials.

Tenderers who are interested to participate in any of the tender options can obtain the tender documents from the Procurement Department in Jordan Electricity Authority main offices located between the 6th and the 7th circles- Jabal Amman starting from Saturday 11/11/1995 onwards against a nonrefundable amount of USD 1000 or equivalent in Jordan Dinars in favour of Jordan Electricity Authority for each set of tender documents and submission of a purchase order accompanied by a copy of the receipt for payment.

The purchase order should clearly include the tenderer's name, his local agent and address, telex, fax and telephone number.

Bids are to be submitted to the Secretary of Tendering Committee at the above address not later than 12:00 noon Amman time on Saturday 10/2/96 accompanied with a bid bond in the amount given in the tender documents.

Director General
Eng. M.S. Arafah

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Second floor consisting of 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room, central heating.

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JORDAN ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY ADVERTISEMENT

FOR ISSUE OF TENDER NO. JS/02/95 FOR 400KV SWITCHGEAR, REACTORS AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT FOR AMMAN NORTH SUBSTATION ELECTRICAL INTERCONNECTION PROJECT BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA

Jordan Electricity Authority declares that they have secured a loan from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development for financing the 400kv electrical interconnection project with the Syrian Network.

Jordan Electricity Authority intends to use part of this loan for financing of the Tender No. JS/02/95 which includes design, manufacture, delivery, installation, testing, commissioning and guarantee of 400kv conventional outdoor switchgear as Option 1 or 400kv SF6 metalclad switchgear as Option 2 and control, protection and ancillary equipment complete with civil works for Amman North 400kv Substation.

Tenderers who are interested to participate in this tender can obtain the tender documents from the Procurement Department in Jordan Electricity Authority main offices located between the 6th and the 7th circles- Jabal Amman starting from Saturday 11/11/1995 onwards against a nonrefundable amount of USD 1000 or equivalent in Jordan Dinars in favour of Jordan Electricity Authority for each set of tender documents and submission of a purchase order accompanied by a copy of the receipt for payment.

The purchase order should clearly include the tenderer's name, his local agent and address, telex, fax and telephone number.

In case the tenderer requires the tender documents to be sent to him by mail, the express airmail cost will be added.

Bids are to be submitted to the Secretary of Tendering Committee at the above address not later than 12:00 noon Amman time on Saturday 10/2/96 accompanied with a tender bond in the amount given in the tender documents.

Director General
Eng. M.S. Arafah

MODERN FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

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In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Um Al Hussein Orphanage
The winning Lottery ticket numbers in the Um Al Hussein charity bazaar raffle, drawn on Nov. 10, 1995

Prize	Winning	Prize	Winning	Prize	Winning
No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
1	30168	20	16921	39	33620
2	20802	21	27551	40	6493
3	1277	22	6345	41	232
4	30898	23	6129	42	28695
5	9400	24	30266	43	2467
6	29351	25	9569	44	13444
7	33888	26	4132	45	9940
8	1479	27	13567	46	6974
9	10389	28	23761	47	4781
10	20223	29	17488	48	411
11	8081	30	33475	49	420
12	900	31	2413	50	12850
13	26514	32	32042	51	301
14	25506	33	13008	52	30402
15	1441	34	13421	53	30214
16	13790	35	32145	54	8586
17	33511	36	30330	55	6262
18	29103	37	4491	56	3036
19	6261	38	19786	57	23667
				58	23666

Holders of winning tickets are kindly requested to call on Um Al Hussein Orphanage, North Marka, near the Public Transport Corporation's workshops, Tel.: 892680

Jordan Times

Tel: 684311

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HORSCH
The Jordanian Master Game

THAT CERTAIN FLAIR

East-West vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
A A 5 3
Q J 8 6
Q J 10 7 4

WEST
A Q 9 2
Q 7 6
Q A 10
A R 5

SOUTH
A 4
Q A K J 10 8 6 4 2
Q K 7
A 5 3

The bidding:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1 A Pass 1 A 40
Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of A. Here's another example of the type of hand that is a bone to the average player, yet the expert will almost always get right automatically. Again, it involves no spectacular pyrotechnics, just sound technique.

The action requires some comment. When partner responds to one club with one spade, the odds greatly favor partner having a five-card suit. This is especially true here, where East is surely short in hearts. Therefore, we would have

bid four spades with the West dealer, a contract that requires accurate defense to defeat. (Try it yourself.)

Defending against four hearts. West led the king of clubs, West's spade was taken and trumps were drawn in three rounds. Declarer then led the remaining club. West grabbed the ace and returned a spade, and declarer eventually had to lead a diamond from hand — down one.

Umpire one of dummy's entries to lead a diamond to the king would have been as futile.

A card-play which would make the hand in no time flat. West would not have shifted to a spade with four cards in that suit, since the defender could infer that declarer was almost certainly void in the suit. Therefore, after winning the ace of spades at trick two, declarer would ruff a spade, return to the table with the queen of hearts and ruff another spade. Now trumps would be drawn, after which declarer would win with a club.

On winning the club trick, West would be faced with a choice of losing plays. Breaking diamonds would eliminate one of declarer's losers in the suit, returning a club would be even worse, permitting declarer to discard both diamonds on the high clubs.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

Delan Walsh
& Lora Leoni...in
CONGO

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 699239

PLAZA

Denzel Washington
Jene Hackman In
CRIMSON TIDE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
Sylvester Stallone...in
ASSASSINS
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
Adel Imam & Yusra
Birds of the Darkness
Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15

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Written & directed by
Mohammad Shawaqfeh

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

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In view of the travel
of the actors abroad
the theatre is closed
until further notice

Sports

Prix

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Italy edge out Ukraine

BARI (AFP) — Italy stormed back from a goal down to beat Ukraine 3-1 here on Saturday night, virtually guaranteeing themselves a place in next year's European Championships in England.
Two goals in five minutes at the start of the second-half killed off the Ukrainians as Italy, who had made a poor start, finally got into gear. They finished comfortable winners of the Group 4 tie.
The first three goals all arose from defensive errors. Antonio Benarrivo, the Parma right-back, completely missed his kick in the 18th minute, allowing the ball to run on to the left wing and Gennady Orbu, who passed inside to Andrei Polunin.
Polunin's drive from eight metres was deflected in off defender Ciro Ferrara as he tried to block.
Three minutes later, Benarrivo made amends by chasing a long through-ball from Ferrara into the Ukrainian penalty area.
Ukrainian goalkeeper Oleg Suslov half-blocked the shot and as the ball bobbed towards the goal-line, Ukrainian substitute Aleksandr Evushok ran back but completely missed the ball, leaving Fabrizio Ravanelli a simple tap-in.
The killer blows came soon after the break.
Massimo Crippa, a second-half substitute for Dino Baggio, sent a low cross into the box just three minutes after the re-start. Viktor Skripnik tried to clear but deceived his own keeper and Juventus hero Ravanelli was there on the goal line to guide the ball home.
Five minutes later, AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini joined in the attack and scored the goal of the game — chipping the ball over a defender and then volleying it past the keeper from just inside the penalty area.
Milan teammate Marco Zola, who came on for Gianfranco Zola up front, sent close twice as the Italians tightened the screw.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Jansher takes record 7th title
NICOSIA (R) — Jansher Khan of Pakistan won a record seventh World Open Squash title on Saturday, beating British challenger Del Harris 15-10, 17-14, 16-17, 15-8. But the Englishman gave Jansher his toughest final in seven years, saving three match points to win the third game. It took the world champion a gruelling 101 minutes to win. The 26-year-old has now assured his place in the history books by passing compatriot Jahangir Khan's six world open titles. "I felt a lot of pressure," he told reporters after the match. "I am 26 and getting older by the day. If I lost now, it would be difficult to keep the momentum."

Collymore threatens to quit
LONDON (R) — Striker Stan Collymore, Britain's most expensive player, has threatened to quit soccer, saying his £8.5 million (\$13.4 million) transfer to Liverpool has turned into a nightmare. The 24-year-old, who left Nottingham Forest in the off-season, has made little impact at Anfield where he cannot hold down a regular first team place. Collymore, who has admitted he has found it difficult adjusting to Liverpool's slick passing style, is quoted in the British Sunday Mirror tabloid as saying he is prepared to turn his back on football.

Bure out for NHL season
VANCOUVER (AFP) — Russia's Pavel Bure, who scored 60 goals three seasons ago for the National Hockey League's Vancouver Canucks, will miss the remainder of this season with a torn right knee ligament. Bure was checked from behind into the boards by Steve Smith in a 5-2 loss to the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday. Bure was sliding into the boards behind the net as he was hit by Smith. Pat Quinn, the Canucks general manager, said under no circumstances will Bure be back this season, not even for the playoffs, because of the torn anterior cruciate ligament. "Luckily he suffered no other damage to his knee," team doctor Ross Davidson said. Bure and compatriot Alexander Mogilny were expected to form one of this season's most high-scoring NHL duos.

Squash fights for Olympic inclusion
NICOSIA (AFP) — Squash was still fighting to become an Olympic sport by the year 2000, the president of the World Squash Federation (WSF) said on Sunday. Malaysia's Tunku Imran, whose influence at the head of the WSF helped squash into the Commonwealth Games in his home country in 1998, is determined it should also be included in the Sydney Olympics. Beach volleyball and softball are provisional sports for the 1996 Atlanta Games, and triathlon and taekwondo have the same status in the 2000 Games. Imran is hopeful that squash, with 105 member nations and 15 million players, will also join the Olympic movement at the turn of the century. "We are still trying hard to get Olympic recognition for squash," Imran said.

Celtic win 2-1
GLASGOW (R) — Tall Dutch striker Pierre Van Hooydonk scored twice as Celtic beat Partick Thistle 2-1 to edge two points nearer leaders Rangers, held 1-1 at home by Aberdeen, in the Scottish Premier Division on Saturday. Rangers have 32 points and Celtic 28 after 13 matches. Third-placed Hibernian fell behind with a 2-0 defeat at Falkirk and are on 22 points, two above Aberdeen. Russian Oleg Salenko's 40th-minute equaliser extended Rangers' unbeaten league run to nine games in a keenly contested match at Ibrox. Scotland midfielder Eoin Jess put Aberdeen in front in the 28th minute and although Rangers pulled level they were denied a victory to avenge their League Cup semifinal defeat by the same rivals last month.

NBA punishes 16 for brawl

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Indiana forward Dale Davis and Sacramento forward Michael Smith received the most serious punishments among 16 players fined or suspended by the National Basketball Association (NBA) here Saturday.
The players were involved in a major fight during Friday's game at Indianapolis. The Kings beat the host Pacers 119-95, improving to a franchise-best 5-0 start.
Davis and Smith were each suspended for two games and fined \$20,000 for their part in the brawl, which took place in the third quarter.
The Pacers were without coach Larry Brown, whose angry protest of a referee's call at New York resulted in a one-game suspension he was serving.
Replacements for striking regular NBA referees have now contributed to nine player suspensions and fines worth a combined \$155,000 in the first eight days of the NBA season.
Kings' centre Duane Causwell was suspended one game without pay and fined \$7,500 for serving other than as a peacemaker.
There were 13 other players fined \$2,500 each for leaving the bench area, forcing the league to invoke a rare rule regarding the minimum number of players that must dress for a game.
Smith, Causwell, guard Tyus Edney and forward Byron Houston were forced out of Sacramento's game Saturday at New Jersey. Smith, centre Olden Polynice, guard Sarunas Marciulionis and forward Lionel Simmons will miss Tuesday's game against the Los Angeles Lakers. Walt Williams will be out Thursday at Portland.
Magic nip Heat on last-second layup
Penny Hardaway's tough layup with 1.2 seconds left in the game lifted the Orlando Magic to a 94-93 victory over the Miami Heat on Saturday.
Hardaway, who scored 34 points, worked off a pick set by Horace Grant and went into the lane, double-



clutching over Miami centre Alonzo Mourning.
"Hardaway made the play," Miami coach Pat Riley said. "He makes one incredible shot. He double-pumped it, had Mourning in his face, and made one hell of a shot."
Dennis Scott scored 12 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter as Orlando made up a nine-point deficit and extended its home winning streak against Eastern Conference opponents to 31. They are 46-2 overall at home during that span.
"When we're in this building, we have the fans cheering as loud as they can, we think we can do anything," Hardaway said. "When we were down, the crowd gave us energy and we went on a 10-0 run that really helped us out."
Mourning scored 28 points and Billy Owens added 18 points and 13 rebounds for Miami, which lost its first game of the season after starting a franchise-best 3-0.
In Chicago, Michael Jordan scored 15 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter to lift the Bulls past the Portland Trail Blazers 110-106 and keep them the NBA's only unbeaten team.
The Bulls' 5-0 start is the best in franchise history.
Jordan also had seven assists. Scottie Pippen added 21 points, nine rebounds and six assists for Chicago, which won its second consecutive game without forward Dennis Rodman, who is out with a strained left calf muscle.
Cliff Robinson scored a career-high 39 points and Rod Strickland added 29 for Portland.
In Dallas, Andrew Lang and Ken Norman scored 21 points apiece and the Atlanta Hawks used an 18-2 fourth-quarter run to hand the Mavericks their first loss of the season, 113-100.
Atlanta trailed 85-76 after three quarters before out-scoring the Mavericks 37-15 in the fourth quarter. Stacey Augmon added 10 of his 12 points in the fourth quarter for the Hawks, who have won three straight games, all on the road.
Jim Jackson scored 30 points and Jamal Mashburn added 27 for Dallas, which lost after a franchise-best 4-0 start.
At New Jersey, Jayson Williams scored all 17 of his points in the second half and the nets held the short-handed Sacramento Kings scoreless for the final 3:49 to win 86-84.
Kevin Edwards scored 24 points and Williams added 14 rebounds for New Jersey.
The Kings (5-1) suffered their first loss of the season. Guard Tyus Edney, centre Duane Causwell and forwards Michael Smith and Byron Houston were suspended for their part in a brawl against Indiana on Friday.
Mitch Richmond scored 17 points and Olden Polynice added 16 for the Kings.
In Charlotte, Larry John-

son scored 12 of his 34 points in overtime and Glen Rice added 31 points as the Hornets defeated the Toronto Raptors 123-117.
Johnson scored the first four points of overtime for a 109-105 lead as the Hornets never trailed in the extra period.
Willie Anderson had 25 points and nine rebounds and Murray added 22 points for expansion Toronto (1-5), which lost its fifth straight game.
In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored his 20,000th career point as the Rockets routed the Minnesota Timberwolves 119-97.
Olajuwon's basket with 3:36 left in the first period was his 20,001st career point, making him the 21st player in NBA history to reach the plateau.
In Charlotte, Larry John-

요르단에 오신 것을 환영합니다
Welcome to Jordan



THE CHAIRMAN
Mr. AHMED ISSA MURAD

WELCOMES
**ALL THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL STRATEGY MEETING
TO BE HELD IN AMMAN 14 & 15 NOVEMBER 1995**



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Rebel Serbs sign deal to end E. Slavonia impasse

ERDUT, Croatia (AFP) — In a major breakthrough for the Balkan peace process, Croatian officials and rebel Serbs on Sunday signed an agreement restoring Croatian control over the last area of rebel-held land, four years after it was seized.

Rebel Serb negotiator Milan Milanovic signed the framework agreement on the return of the breakaway region of Eastern Slavonia after talks with U.S. Ambassador Peter Galbraith and U.N. mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg in Erdut, the Serb stronghold in the disputed region.

Mr. Galbraith welcomed the agreement as "historic." "I think this is a historic signing. For the first time in this conflict, an issue has been resolved peacefully by signature," he said.

Mr. Stoltenberg said "It's the beginning of the end of war."

In Zagreb, chief Croatian negotiator Hrvoje Sarinic signed the agreement at a ceremony witnessed by reporters.

Informed sources said Croatian President Franjo Tudjman might return to Zagreb Monday from the U.S.-brokered Balkan peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, following the breakthrough.

Mr. Tudjman has made the return of Eastern Slavonia his key objective.

The return of the territory completes a lighting transformation of the country which began in May when Croatian troops re-took from

rebel Serbs control of western Slavonia and continued in August when they re-took the Krajina region.

The accord signed Sunday provides for a 12-month transition period before the restoration of full Croatian administration and the possibility of extending this period for one year "at the request of one of the parties," according to an unofficial Serbian language translation of the text, seen by AFP.

The 14-point agreement, under which the Serbs dropped their demands for a referendum on the future of the region, if implemented, will avert a Croatian offensive to return the area to Zagreb's control.

The two sides asked the U.N. Security Council to "decide to send international forces who, during the transitional period, will maintain the peace and security of the territory," according to the Serb translation.

A minimum of 30 days before the transitional period ends, a transitional authority "will organise elections for all the local authorities," the text said.

Pressure had grown on the Serbs in recent days to agree to a deal after Croatia moved a reported 1,600 additional troops up to the region at the end of last week, threatening a quick military takeover by their nearly 16,000 frontline troops if an agreement was not reached.

Eastern Slavonia, an area of 2,500 square kilometres of

fertile farmland on the border with Serbia, was seized by Serb rebels in 1991 with the then backing of Belgrade.

One of its main towns, Vukovar, was destroyed by heavy bombing in a merciless four-month siege and 100,000 Croats were forced to flee.

Some 10,000 Croats were killed in the six-month Serbo-Croat war, most of them in Eastern Slavonia.

The Serbs earlier demanded a referendum on the future of the area and a three-year "transition period" of U.N. administration before it would be returned to Croatian control.

The Croats rejected the Serb demand and wanted the transition period kept to one year.

Serbia had also given clear public signs in recent weeks that it would not make a significant military response if Croatia were to attack Eastern Slavonia.

"U.N. officials earlier this month put the number of Serbs and minority Hungarians in Eastern Slavonia at 170,000. 152,000 of them Serbs, many of whom fled to the area earlier this year from other previously Serb-held territory retaken by Croatia in May and August.

Croatia does not recognise the right of residence of many of the Serbs in Eastern Slavonia.



CROWN PRINCE IN BAHRAIN: The emir of Qatar, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, on Sunday receives a message from His Majesty King Hussein during a meeting he held with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in Bahrain. The Crown Prince began a two-day visit to Bahrain on Sunday, in the first visit to Bahrain by a leading Jordanian figure since the 1991 Gulf war (see story on page one) (Petra wirephoto)

Arafat gets 1st Palestinian voter card as registration is launched

GAZA STRIP (AFP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat became the first Palestinian to register for historic elections as officials began on Sunday to draw up an electoral roll across the territories.

Mr. Arafat received the first voter's card, bearing the number one, from Local Government Minister Saeb Erakat after registering at his home in Gaza City.

He filled in and signed the registration forms witnessed by officials from the Palestinian central electoral commission.

"This is a very important first step for the Palestinian identity towards the creation of an independent state of Palestine," Mr. Arafat said.

"We hope that a million and a half Palestinians will take part in these first elections," Dr. Erakat said.

Elections are due to be held in January for an 82-member self-rule council and to elect the president of an

executive authority. So far Mr. Arafat is the only candidate for the post of president.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has launched a massive advertising campaign in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to persuade the Palestinians to register on the electoral roll.

Tens of thousands of posters have been distributed across the territories urging the Palestinians "together we will build our country."

Palestinian radio also broadcast messages throughout the day calling on residents to cooperate with 7,000 teachers, charged with carrying out the registration process.

All Palestinians aged 18 and above will be able to take part in the poll.

A first group of 66 European observers arrived last week, headed by former Swedish Justice Minister Carl Lidbom, to supervise the elections.

They were to be deployed Sunday across the territories

to monitor the registration process.

A total of 300 European Union observers will be deployed for the elections, backed by about 200 others from the United Nations, the United States, Russia, Norway, Japan, Australia, Egypt and Jordan.

The elections will take place after the Israeli army has withdrawn from six Palestinian towns on the West Bank. Under the Sept. 28 autonomy deal, troops will remain in Hebron to protect 400 settlers living among 120,000 Palestinians.

Candidates require the signatures of 500 supporters, and those wishing to run for the head of the Palestine Authority need 5,000 signatures.

Mr. Arafat is to appoint a nine-member committee to oversee elections, and there will be a 15-day period in which candidates can register. Officials said they expected nominations to be completed by Dec. 22.

Algerians throng to vote

PARIS (Agencies) — Thousands of expatriate Algerians thronged around their country's consulates in France on Sunday to vote in Algeria's presidential election after dozens were injured during chaotic scenes when voting began on Saturday.

Police set up crash barriers and emergency medical stations as voting began at 7 a.m. (0600 GMT) on Sunday, an hour earlier than the previous day, to try to avoid Saturday's crush.

Witnesses said about 4,000 people massed outside the consulate in the Riviera city of Nice when voting resumed there after especially wild scenes on Saturday when 25 people were injured, 10 seriously enough to be taken to hospital.

At least 60 people were hurt in similar scenes of panic in Lyon while others were hurt in Lille and Marseille where about 8,000 people pressed around the consulate when its gates opened.

Paris police, apparently better prepared than their colleagues outside the capital, reported no incidents in the capital, where orderly queues hundreds of metres long formed up outside the voting stations.

Paris police had been especially alert for possible fundamentalist attacks, harring all cars from parking anywhere near the voters.

A wave of bomb attacks, blamed on Algerian militants, have killed seven people and wounded 170 others since July.

In Algeria itself seven people have been killed and at least 40 others wounded in escalating violence ahead of the presidential election.

A car bomb exploded Saturday near the city hall in Ouled Yaiche in southern Algeria, killing five people and wounding 40, sources in the capital confirmed Sunday.

Jilted woman injects lover with HIV blood

LONDON (AP) — A jilted Ugandan woman was convicted Friday of injecting her former boyfriend with her HIV-infected blood.

The judge warned Rhena Ndaggwa, 25, that despite her condition she will be jailed when sentence is passed after submission of health reports. In May, Ms. Ndaggwa twice injected her Ugandan lover, David Kabagwire, who had jilted her, the prosecution said.

The government had turned down her application for political asylum.

"There can be nobody in this court who can fail to have sympathy for you, your condition and your ultimate future," said Judge Elizabeth Steel.

"Equally there is nobody in this court who can fail to be horrified by what you did."

Prosecutor Garrett Byrne told the jury at the Old Bailey criminal court that Ms. Ndaggwa and Mr. Kabagwire, 28, became lovers after arriving in Britain in 1993 as students.

They had AIDS tests and Ms. Ndaggwa tested positive for HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS. They continued to have protected sex. Then he began a relationship with another woman and told her he did not want to continue seeing her.

In May, Ms. Ndaggwa told Mr. Kabagwire she was leaving Britain. "She said she had a present for him and she was sure he would like it," said the prosecutor.

They spent that night together and Mr. Kabagwire felt a sudden sharp prick in his shoulder. The next day at her home he bent down to pick up a briefcase, felt a stab in the buttock and saw a needle and syringe on the carpet.

He called the police. Mr. Kabagwire has since again tested negative so far, but faces more tests. "I did not know what to do, I feel upset," he told the jury.

Ms. Ndaggwa, who pleaded innocent, was convicted of causing grievous bodily harm.

Armageddon has been delayed — Jehovah's Witnesses

LONDON (R) — Armageddon has been delayed and the end of the world is no longer nigh, say Jehovah's Witnesses.

Charles Russell, founder of the movement that now boasts five million members, first forecast the world would end in 1914.

Two more "false alarms" occurred in 1925 and 1975 and now the movement has decided not to give any more exact forecasts on judgement day when it believes only its followers will be saved.

Senior church figures, cited in its official Watchtower magazine, called for an end to armageddon speculation.

Man jailed for placing stepdaughter on warm stove

COPENHAGEN (AP) — A Danish man has been sentenced to five months in prison for putting his four-year-old stepdaughter on a hot stove because she kept wetting her pants, a newspaper said.

The 37-year-old man said the girl accidentally fell on the stove, the daily Jyske Vestkysten said. Their names were not released.

Doctors who examined the girl said the second-degree burns on her buttocks could only have come from being pressed down on a warm surface, the newspaper said.

The girl's mother, a 30-year-old woman, was charged with neglecting her child.

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Prominent south Sudanese demand self-determination

KHARTOUM (R) — Five prominent politicians from southern Sudan, including former Vice-President Abel Alier, have told President Omar Hassan Al Bashir that they favour self-determination for the south.

In a letter obtained by Reuters on Sunday, the politicians said southern Sudan had the right even to choose independence.

The Islamist-dominated government in Khartoum, which is at war with the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the south, has refused to discuss self-determination for the southerners, who are mainly Christian or animist.

Sudanese opponents in exile, including Muslim northerners, also favour self-determination for the south but prominent southerners in Khartoum have been wary of stating their views.

The letter said Lieutenant-General Bashir's government, by making Sudan what it called a theocratic Islamic state, had excluded southerners politically and constitutionally.

"The people of southern Sudan are entitled to exercise their fundamental rights of reviewing the experience of the single sovereign state and in the light of that experience to decide either to affirm the unity of that state based on one religion within a framework of a confederal or federal structure, or to take the second option for the southern Sudan to become an independent sovereign entity," it said.

The 40 years since independence had seen increasing distrust between north and south, civil wars, suppression of fundamental and political freedoms, violations of human rights and economic and social marginalisation of the south, they added.

"During this long period, various governments in Khartoum formulated and implemented policies that emphasised racial, cultural, religious and linguistic assimilation."

"And in recent years a war of religious jihad was declared on southern Sudan and a new civilisation project was launched consisting of racial,

religious, cultural, social and economic components," they added.

The signatories are Abel Alier, vice president under Jaafar Numeiri in the 1970s, former Sudanese Minister Joseph Ukel and three men who have been ministers in the south's regional government — Ezekiel Kudi, Isaiah Kulang and Henry Tong.

They represent a large constituency in southern Sudan and Abel Alier in particular commands huge respect not only in the south but also in the north.

They called for a transitional administration and an end to fighting in the south so that southerners could exercise their right to self-determination fairly and fully.

The five politicians noted that the Sudanese opposition in exile, at a meeting in the Eritrean capital Asmara in June, also backed self-determination for the south.

"We give our fullest support to the principle of self-determination embodied in the Asmara resolutions," their letter said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arabs draw up plan to fight 'terrorism'

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab justice ministers drew up a draft plan for combatting militant violence by setting up extradition mechanisms between their countries, Egyptian Justice Minister Farouk Seif Al Nasr said Sunday. The draft agreement "underlines the desire of the parties for close cooperation against terrorism, which threatens security and stability in Arab countries," Mr. Nasr told the press. The executive committee of the Arab League Council of Justice ministers in Cairo drew up the draft in coordination with the council of interior ministers, he said. It "establishes the bases for cooperation against terrorism especially (concerning) the exchange of information and evidence and the mechanisms for extraditing prisoners," he said. The draft must be vetted by the full council of justice ministers, to meet on Tuesday before being put before the next full league session in March.

Former Lebanon hostage Mann dies

NICOSIA (R) — Former Lebanon hostage and British World War II hero Jack Mann died on Sunday of heart and lung failure after a long illness, a doctor said at his home in Cyprus. Mann, 81, was kidnapped in 1989 by militants in Beirut and was the oldest of a group of Western hostages. He was released in 1991 after more than two years of solitary confinement. The doctor said medical staff were the only people present when Mann died at his home in a suburb of Nicosia early on Sunday. Mann's wife Sunnie, who he met in 1942, died in 1992.

Kurdish pro-Saddam party to be set up

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A new pro-Saddam Kurdish party is to be set up in Iraq, the second political group to be formed since the authorities announced last month a policy of "openness," an official newspaper reported Sunday. The new party "will act for the unity of the Arab-Kurdish struggle and socialism," founding member Salaheddine Jalal Hakeem wrote in an article published by Al Jannah. Mr. Hakeem blasted the Kurdish opposition parties controlling northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since 1991, saying "they imposed themselves on the Kurdish people and thrive on attacks" against them. On Tuesday, a former member of the banned Iraqi Communist Party announced the formation of a Marxist party. Both parties will be allies of President Saddam Hussein's Baath Party which seized power in 1968, their founders said. President Saddam announced a policy of openness after his victory in the Oct. 15 referendum in which he was the only candidate.

Kabul says Taliban pushed back

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan government troops Sunday pushed back the Taliban militia besieging Kabul by 10 kilometres on a frontline west of the capital, Defence Ministry officials said.

The fresh offensive came a day after 36 civilians were killed and 52 injured according to the government, in the deadliest shelling of the capital since the rebels arrived on the outskirts of the city last month.

Journalists counted 21 bodies in different parts of the capital.

Taliban fighters launched the massive rocket and artillery barrage on the city after forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani repulsed attempts by the rebels to take the city of Friday, the officials said.

Officials earlier said only three people had been killed and 25 wounded in the salvos which hit the capital intermittently throughout the day.

Among the dead were a young girl and eight other people — including a movie director and his actors — who were killed when a rocket slammed into Afghanistan's only private movie studio as they filmed a scene, witnesses said.

Six more people died later Saturday when a rocket hit a crowded scientific training centre in a residential area, while another rocket claimed three lives when it struck a nearby house.

Tehran on low key over German vote

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has adopted a low profile towards the conference on "Europe and the Islamic World," which was to be held this Wednesday and Thursday.

Besides Mr. Velayati, the foreign ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Italy, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia and Turkey were to participate along with 300 or so experts.

Iran News, a daily close to the Foreign Ministry, slammed the vote on Sunday but withheld any criticism of the German government for postponing the conference.

The English-language paper published a statement on the issue from the German embassy in Iran stressing Mr. Kinkel's determination "to hold the conference as soon as possible."

The daily, however, accused the German parliament of "seeking to deceive Western public opinion" of Iran, saying the vote was the result of a "guilt feeling German lawmakers have about what their predecessors did to the Jewish community" in Germany.

Salam, a daily representing Islamic left-wingers, hit out at Germany for its "audacity to interfere in our internal affairs and make judgements about the comments of the highest executive authority in our country."

The challenge thrown by the German parliament (at the government) is only temporary and the country will eventually move toward independence, he said in the first official reaction from Iran to the vote.

Following the vote, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel decided to postpone the conference on "Europe and the Islamic World," which was to be held this Wednesday and Thursday.

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Mubarak assailant trainer gunned down

CAIRO (Agencies) — Police shot dead on Sunday a militant who trained attackers in the failed assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia last June, police said.

Police tracked Abdul Karim Abu Al Fadi Faris, 31, to a hideout in the mountains between Beni Swef and Fayoum provinces, around 100 kilometres south of Cairo.

When they stormed his hideout in a dawn raid, as he fled, police said.

Faris had recently slipped over the border from Sudan, where he had lived the past two years, to "coordinate between terrorist groups in Egypt's provinces" and distribute to them weapons smuggled in from Sudan.

The raid came a day after police uncovered in Aswan province further south a huge cache of weapons they said were brought into country from Sudan for militants.

While in Sudan, Faris participated in training the squad of gunmen who ambushed Mr. Mubarak's motorcade in Addis Ababa on June 26 in an assassination attempt from which the Egyptian president emerged unscathed.

Police accused Khartoum of backing the attack, which was claimed by the Egyptian

Armageddon has been delayed — Jehovah's Witnesses

LONDON (R) — Armageddon has been delayed and the end of the world is no longer nigh, say Jehovah's Witnesses.

Charles Russell, founder of the movement that now boasts five million members, first forecast the world would end in 1914.

Two more "false alarms" occurred in 1925 and 1975 and now the movement has decided not to give any more exact forecasts on judgement day when it believes only its followers will be saved.

Senior church figures, cited in its official Watchtower magazine, called for an end to armageddon speculation.

Man jailed for placing stepdaughter on warm stove

COPENHAGEN (AP) — A Danish man has been sentenced to five months in prison for putting his four-year-old stepdaughter on a hot stove because she kept wetting her pants, a newspaper said.

The 37-year-old man said the girl accidentally fell on the stove, the daily Jyske Vestkysten said. Their names were not released.

Doctors who examined the girl said the second-degree burns on her buttocks could only have come from being pressed down on a warm surface, the newspaper said.

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